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DRAMATIC

AND

NARRATIVE

POEMS.

BY

JOHN JOSHUA
EARL OF CARYSFORT, K. P.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.
NARRATIVE POEMS.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. MACKINLAY,
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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

THE REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

THE STATUES.

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ERRATA.—VOL. II.

50. l. 15. *for* Imogen *read* Innogen.
229. l. 9. *for* footsteps *read* footstep.
203. l. 2. } *for* glitt'ring *read* glittering.
321. l. 7. } *for* advent'rous *read* adventurous.

The Reader is desired particularly to attend to these two instances, but he will find many others where his taste will lead him to restore the vowel which has been omitted in the printing.

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THE

REVENGE

OF

GUENDOLEN.

BOOK I.

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THE Invasion of Loëgria. Locrine assembles his Army. His Interview with Estrildis. His March. Estrildis is comforted by Boarex. Description of the residence of Estrildis.

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*** Brutus, descended from Æneas, is said to have planted a colony in Britain. He found the country inhabited by giants, whom he subdued and exterminated, after many conflicts; in which Corineus, one of his followers, distinguished himself so much, that he was rewarded with the sovereignty of Cornwall, which was called after his name. Brutus, at his death, divided the rest of the island among his sons: Albanact had the northern part, called from him *Albania*; Camber had the country between the Severn and the Irish sea, called *Cambria*; the third and largest share, called *Loëgria*, fell to Locrine. He married Guendolen, the daughter of Corineus, and had a son by her, called Madan.

Humber, King of the *Huns*, having invaded the dominions of Albanact, who was defeated and killed, in a great battle, advanced to the frontiers of Loëgria, where he was encountered by Locrine, and lost the battle and his life. Among the captives was a beautiful lady, called Estrildis, of whom Locrine became enamoured; but fearing the resentment of Corineus, concealed his commerce with her till the death of that prince, when he divorced Guendolen, and acknowledged Estrildis for his queen. Guendolen took refuge in Cornwall, and raising an army, invaded the dominions of Locrine. Here the action of the poem begins.

The great celebrity of the Romans accounts for the propensity of other nations to draw their original from the same source; and the fables of Geoffry of Mon-

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mouth found an easy reception in this island, as they gratified the vanity, and agreed with the reigning prejudices of the nation. Milton, whose extensive learning, and penetrating criticism, could have detected the imposture, has given new importance to the legends of Brutus, and his successors, by repeating them in the first Book of his History of England, for the sake, as he says, of our poets and rhetoricians. The apotheosis of Sabra, the daughter of Locrine and Estildis, is entirely of his invention, and makes a principal ornament of the Mask of Comus.

The author was led, by the notes to the last Canto of Mr. Hayley's Essay on Epic Poetry, to try the effect of the northern mythology in a composition of the narrative kind. The genius of Gray, whose imagination appears to have been strongly engaged by the wild sublimity of that system, would, no doubt, have produced a poem, which would have lived through ages, if he had pursued the idea suggested by Mr. Gibbon: and a noble work may hereafter be raised upon the splendid Fables, and allegories of Hindostan. In making an excursion into a new field of poetical ornament, the Author was not actuated by any presumptuous ambition, but merely endeavoured to assist himself in forming his own opinion upon the question touched by Mr. Hayley. Even this slight attempt may contribute to incite some powerful Muse. Virgil and Milton drew materials and hints, for their immortal poems, from obscure and feeble authors. They were able to develop,

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and display in all their lustre, those beauties which meaner intellects could hardly conceive.

With respect to the general question as to the value of machinery in the higher kinds of poetry, it seems most reasonable to consider it as neither absolutely necessary, nor wholly to be rejected. The utmost sublimity and pathos may often be attained without it; but it is supported by the authority, and example of whom? Homer, Virgil, Euripides, Eschylus, and Sophocles, Tasso, Milton, Shakspeare. In opposition to this most weighty testimony, we have the opinion of Boileau, and the example of Lucan. The former probably did not mean to give a general opinion. His object was only to expose the folly and bad taste of some pretenders to poetical fame of his own age and nation. The latter was, indeed, the author of a noble work, deserving high reputation, and of great excellence in its kind: but how inferior, in every point of view, to the great authors we have just enumerated! Quintilian thinks that Lucan, by his Pharsalia, had entitled himself to the praise, rather of an orator than a poet.

The liberty of coining new words has been assumed by most writers in verse. But no licence ought to be used with more caution and reserve. In every case, the analogies of the language should be scrupulously observed, for the sake of precision, and clearness, as well as the general harmony of the style. There is not, it is believed, any authority for the word *Resorb*, which will be found in page 11; but *ab*sorb is in daily and familiar

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use, and the power of the particle *re* is obvious to every English reader. The Author knew no established term which would exactly answer his purpose, and he trusts he shall stand excused for having introduced this word, the sense of which can scarcely be mistaken. It was pointed out to him by Gray's ode in the Album of the Chartreuse.

—— *Me resorbens*
In medios violenta fluctus.

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THE

REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

BOOK I.

Oh faith! and thou, connubial sanctity!
Mother of virtue, and domestic joy!
Ordain'd by heaven to knit in holy league
Of love, and common benefit, mankind!
From your just laws despis'd, what evils spring!
An haughty princess vindicates in arms
Her slighted beauty, and her injur'd bed:
Sullied with gore, o'er mangled carcases

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Th' obstructed river[b] rolls his angry wave,
While kindred heroes fall by mutual wounds:
A glorious chief, by vulgar hands expires:
And the fair partner of his guilty love,
Pale with foreboding fears, expects the sword
Of vengeance, and th' inexorable doom!
Such be the subject of the moral lay.
A mournful tale, from ancient days derived,
What time Ausonian Brutus' warlike race
Their sceptre rear'd o'er Britain's fertile isle.

New from Belerium,[c] and the western main,
From Menna's rocky coast, and the rude craggs
Of high Ocrinum, from the source of Vale,
To where Voluba spreads her winding bays,
And proud Pendennis, far at sea descried,

[b] The Sture, or Stour, a river, on whose banks Locrine fought the forces of Cornwall. There are many rivers in England known by this name. That which crossing Dorsetshire flows into the sea in Christchurch Bay, seems to agree best with the other circumstances of the story.

[c] Ancient names of places in Cornwall.

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Directs the Tyrian mariner, who steers
His vessel, freighted from the spicy East,
For Cenio's ample port; from the tall cliff,
Where bold Corineus[d] foil'd his Giant-foe,
Hurl'd headlong to the main, the troubled waves
Roll'd back affrighted, and the mountain shook.
From Cambala,[e] whose lucid waters stray'd
As yet unstain'd with blood, hereafter doom'd
To witness horrid war, in guilty fight
Britons with Britons mix'd, and Arthur slain.
From all her mountains, and from all her streams,
Cornubia sends her armed sons to war,
Breathing revenge. Before th' assembled tribes

[d] Corineus was a leader who accompanied Brutus, and had Cornwall as his share. His name is commonly written Corinæus. The pronunciation I have adopted, as best suited to my metre, is sufficiently justified by the authority of Spencer's Fa. Q. B. II. c. 10. It is related of this fabulous hero, that he wrestled with Gogmagog, one of the giants, native of the island, twelve cubits in height, and prevailing after a vigorous contest, carried him upon his shoulders to a high rock, called ever since Langoëmagog, and threw him into the sea.

[e] A river, on whose banks the battle was fought between Mordred and king Arthur.

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Their injur'd princess Guendolen appears.
Faded and wan she seems; but shame, and rage,
And mingled pride, contending in her breast,
With transient colour flush her varying cheek.
No costly gems upon her forehead blaze,
Loose to the wind her hair disorder'd flies,
And for the regal purple's graceful folds
She wears the garb of mourning. Pity seiz'd
The crowd, and for a while suspended rage.
But as she told the story of her woes,
And perjur'd Locrine's guilt, Corineus' daughter,
Abandon'd, outcast, and a slave[f] advanc'd
To fill her bed and throne; when, glowing now
With generous pride, and graceful indignation,
She call'd upon her mighty father's shade;
Remembrance of their prince, their country's honour,
Kindled in every breast the flame of vengeance.
They clash'd their sounding arms, and rush'd along.

[f] Estrildis, taken in the camp of Humber, king of the Huns, when he was defeated by Locrine.

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And now, the rapid Tamar pass'd, invade
Loëgria's frontier, and defenceless plains,
With sudden war and ruthless devastation.
As when th' inhabitant of those fair isles
Beyond th' Atlantic, when the sky serene
And the calm air invites, wooes the fresh breeze,
Which, lightly sweeping o'er the level deep,
Moistens his pinions in the cooling wave;
Delighted he inhales the grateful air.
Sudden the tumid billows rise; the earth
Meanwhile, of ill prophetic, murmurs forth
A sullen sound: trembling and pale, he flies.
In vain. High o'er his head, the dreadful roar
Of waters, from the whole collected sea
Rais'd horrible, pursues with hideous din
His flight; and now before him foaming spreads
The vast o'erarching deluge; now it breaks
In more than thunder, and th' insatiate deep,
Howling o'er cultur'd fields, and peopled towns,
Resorbs a nation with the turning waves.

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Not with less horror pale Loëgria shook.
And now the rumour reach'd, where by the banks
Of that fair stream,[g] whose winding course divides
Loëgria from the lands by Camber rul'd,
In dalliance soft, and unsuspecting ease,
With her his Scythian spouse, the fair Estrildis,
Acknowledg'd now his queen, the monarch lay,
And all the weighty cares of state resign'd.
Rous'd from his dream of bliss, but not dismay'd,
He bids his warlike chiefs appear in arms;
And now in marshall'd ranks his veteran bands
Innumerable, beat th' extended plain
With sounding footsteps, as they move embattled.
Along the files the mighty Locrine darts
Exulting his experienc'd eye, and glows
With the bright hope of promis'd victory.
He gives the word. As by one soul inform'd,
The marching myriads halt. Around their king

[g] The Severn.

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Advancing from the ranks assemble now
The leaders of his battles. Rising slow,
With look compos'd, speaking deliberate courage,
Firm to sustain, not rashly tempting danger,
The monarch thus: "Brave partners of my toils,
And partners of my glory; you, who met
With me the bold invader of our realm,
Th' impetuous Humber, when with spoils adorn'd,
And trophies, torn from bleeding Albany,
He pass'd our limits, and return'd no more.
'Tis mine to mingle where the battle burns,
And bear the death of thousands on my spear.
Yet not in fierce and savage deeds of arms,
Where blind revenge, or lust of conquest drives,
Your king delights. Mine be the sword of justice;
Nor you shall sully your victorious arms
In an unrighteous cause. Then hear, and judge.
If I have wrong'd the banish'd Guendolen,
Or mov'd by mercy, by affection swayed,
To lightest penance doom'd enormous guilt,

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The prince appeals his people. To relate
With what fond care, and unsuspecting kindness
I cherish'd that false serpent; what the toils
I bore, how oft in hardy battle bled
To fix her father's throne, what now avails?
Not with domestic broils to shake our peace
Content, the sorceress each factious spirit,
All whom the sense of guilt made desperate,
To join in league, and dark conspiracy,
By promis'd gain allur'd, or hope of safety;
That she might hold in bonds our sovereign state,
And trample on our high, imperial crown.
Yet more, my son,[h] the destin'd heir of empire,
Her impious arts have from my side seduc'd,
Plac'd in her father's court, and guarded there,
Hostage of my subjection. This I bore,
Studious of public peace, and slow to vengeance.
At length, by long impunity made bold,

[h] Madan, the son of Locrine and Guendolen, was brought up with his grandfather, Corineus, in Cornwall.

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She grasp'd my sceptre with more fierce impatience,
And practis'd cursed spells against my life.
Yet mindful of the love I once had borne her,
The glories of her race, our kindred lineage,
Still mercy temper'd justice. From my throne
And bed divorc'd, I spar'd her forfeit head.
Now force must win what fraud in vain essay'd,
And bind Loëgria in Cornubian chains.
Nor mov'd alone by love, but public care,
I led Estrildis to the bridal bed.
She is no princess of a rival nation:
Last of a noble race in arms renown'd,
With lineal heroes she may grace the throne,
But not with faction shake it." Locrine thus,
With fair pretence, and specious gloss of words,
Veil'd the foul breach of faith and holy vows.
Not unapproving heard the chiefs: (to them
Dear was his person, dear his martial ardour:)
Nor much solicitous, with nice regard,
To weigh the right, avow'd their prince's cause.

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Perhaps the pow'rs of heav'n their partial minds
Sway'd to erroneous judgment; that proud guilt
Hurl'd from his high presumptuous hope, though rais'd
On prudent counsels, and on warlike force,
Their justice might to trembling man proclaim.
Each to his post repair'd, and to his troops
Announc'd determin'd war. At once arose
Their universal shout, that shook the sky.
The monarch hears with joy. Meanwhile he seeks
His fair Estrildis in the secret bower.
All bath'd in tears the pensive nymph he found,
With sad reflection pale, and anxious fears.
Fondly he strain'd her to his manly breast,
And thus: "Why weeps my love, my best Estrildis?
Thy Locrine's arm is not unskill'd in war,
And Fortune bears my standard to the field."
"Oh had Estrildis," thus the queen replied,
"Cut short ev'n in the blossom of her youth,
Perish'd ere yet she lisp'd a mother's name;
Ere she had seen a noble father slain,

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In battle vanquish'd in a foreign land!
Or had at least more fav'ring gods assign'd
To her the common ruin of her race!
Had war's remorseless hand, in one sad day,
Mix'd with the sire's the daughter's virgin blood,
Ere in the secret shade, with guilty joy,
I listen'd to thy tender tale of love,
And with fond rapture prest thee to my heart,
Thy hands yet reeking with my father's blood!
Now his dear image haunts my broken sleep.
Dreadful he frowns, upbraids my parricide,
Dooms me to horrid pains, and ling'ring death,
Or worse than death, to savage Guendolen
Delivers me, a trembling, helpless victim.
With kinder gesture now, and look benignant,
He whispers soft forgiveness in my ear.
Sudden the scene is chang'd. The cry of woe
Invades my sense, the scream of female horror.
I see thee stretch'd before me, pale and lifeless,
And pierc'd with wounds, and stiff with clotted blood."

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Would'st thou forget our loves?" the hero cried:
"No; when these black ideas haunt thy fancy,
Bid fond remembrance dwell on ev'ry kiss,
Each stolen rapture, and each soft endearment.
Pledge of our mutual bliss, thy gentle Sabra
Displays her blooming charms. Oh fondly press
The beauteous maid to thy maternal bosom,
Then, if thou canst, wish we had never lov'd.
Nor deem that Locrine was thy father's foe:
For honour was our strife, not hate or vengeance.
The brave, my best belov'd, still prize the brave;
And, might the hero's shade revisit earth,
Pleas'd would his martial hand bestow thy beauty
On him whose prowess could surpass his own."
Thus sooth'd he his fair spouse. A pleasing calm
Stole o'er her soul, a sweet suspense of grief.
She rais'd her streaming eyes, and smil'd in tears.
So, from the region of the sultry South,
When dark collected vapours rolling on,
Have quench'd the radiance of the summer morn,

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And the loud thunder growls, and rain descends,
Sudden the golden Sun darts forth his beams,
Scatt'ring the thin skirts of the passing storm;
Then smiles the joyful earth; but other clouds
With dark and threat'ning aspect lour behind.
Now warlike cares demand the chief. He rose
Prepar'd to part. Again her sorrows flow,
Again the echoing roof resounds her cries.
She beats her wretched breast, entreats his stay,
And hangs upon his robe in frantic grief;
Exhausted now, she faints. The gentle Sabra
With milder action presses with her lips
His hand, while from her eyes the trickling moisture
Falls silent: he, though firm of soul, not proof
'Gainst human feelings, turns his face to hide
The tear he checks in vain, and hastes away.
And now he reach'd the plain, where, sheath'd in arms
And rang'd in just array, Loëgria's youth
Expect their leader. He with joy surveys
Their numerous files, and marks their bold demeanour.

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Nor less elate, they with admiring eyes
Beheld their graceful chief. He seem'd a god.
Such to their fathers, by the sacred wave
Of their ador'd Scamander, when the foe
Sought the vain shelter of their wooden walls,
Appear'd the mighty Hector, or confest
To mortal eyes, the dreadful god of war
Flam'd in the foremost battle. Fear and flight
Precede. Wild horror seiz'd each Grecian heart.
" Ye brave assertors of your country's rights,
Ye genuine sons of Troy," the hero cried,
" Whence is this mighty nation, whose bold arms
Insult our frontiers, and provoke our wrath?
Are these the matchless warriors, they who late
Suppliant, with outstretch'd arms, implor'd our aid,
When the rude natives from their cloudy hills
Scourg'd back the weak invaders, who but ill
Sustain'd their aspect fierce, and giant strength,
When, loos'ning from their seats the rooted rocks,
They hurl'd th' enormous ruin on their foe?

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Then, suppliant, they implor'd our aid, and wag'd
Successful war, with forces not their own.
Presumptuous! they who would our country seize
Have none but by our gift. Advance, my friends,
Advance your ensigns, lift your shining arms.
They view our fertile plains with envious eyes;
Those fertile plains superior valour won,
Superior valour guards. Hence let them fly
'Midst rugged rocks, and desert caves, to seek
A refuge from our wrath." He spoke; at once
A thousand banners float upon the air;
At once they march: a thousand instruments
Sound forth their martial strains, and as they move
Loud rings the brazen armour. Neighing steeds
Whirl o'er the smoking plain the scythed cars;
Earth shakes, and heav'n's wide-echoing arch resounds.
Upon their dancing plumes, and glitt'ring helms,
Sits Confidence. Elate with hope they move,
And eager for the war: some god deceives
Their dazzled sense, and urges on to ruin.

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Dire omens else had warn'd, and signs portentous,
The air was darken'd; o'er their heads the raven
Oft flapp'd his wing; the towering eagle scream'd,
Claiming his destin'd prey. But now apart,
And distant from his host, the dauntless Locrine
Pour'd to his guardian pow'rs his ardent pray'r.
"Oh thou, bright author of my race, fair queen
Of smiles, and young desires, delight of heav'n!
The joyful earth thy genial pow'r obeys,
And gives the fragrant rose to deck thy bower.
For thee stern Neptune stills his raging waves,
And touch'd by thy soft pow'r, the gloomy Dis
Unbends his sullen brow. The sire of gods
On thee, his best belov'd, delighted smiles,
Sooth'd with th' ambrosial kiss, and to thy hand
Permits th' almighty sceptre. Goddess, now
Assist thy vot'ry, whom proud Juno's ire,
Still hostile to our Trojan race, pursues!
By Ida's conscious shades, where first enraptur'd
Anchises gaz'd on thy immortal charms;

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By the soft pleasures of thy Paphian bower.
Protect the passion by thyself inspir'd!
And thou, impetuous Mars, before whose spear
Withers the strength of nations; thou, to whom
I vow'd my vigorous youth, my guardian god!
Aid thou my vengeance, and direct my sword!"
Thus pray'd the hero, but he pray'd in vain.
The queen of love, the dreadful god of arms,
Well pleas'd attend, but angry Jove denies.

Mean-while, in fair Estrildis' anxious breast
Conflicting passions fought. Th' attendant train
Essay'd the charm of soothing words, or drew
Spells of more moving force from tuneful harps
Attemper'd to soft voices; soft as those
Which nightly floating o'er Trinacrian seas
Melodious, ravish'd the delighted sense,
And lur'd to sweet destruction. And their song
Was fram'd to win upon the ear of care,
With light and playful airs, inspiring joy.
Of amorous wiles they told, and moon-light pranks

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Of gamesome fairies, who in merry mood,
With shapes uncouth, and strange fantastic visions,
Mock the deluded sense of simple swain.
Unnotic'd died away the dulcet sounds.
Ill-boding fears sat heavy at her breast,
And irksome memory of sorrows past,
And absence from the lord of her desires,
And conscious sense of guilt, suppress'd in vain.
Yet oft she check'd th' invading woe, and strove,
Decking with languid smiles her faded cheek,
To rouse expiring hope. As oft recoil'd,
With double force, the melancholy train
Of sad ideas on her tortur'd soul.
Thus with alternate sway, imperfect hope,
And keen corroding anguish, swell her breast,
Till with the painful struggle over-worn,
She sinks in tears, and yielded all to grief.
Like some fair elm which lifts her graceful head,
And bears her leafy honours to the clouds,
In all their summer pride. The fierce south-west

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Tempestuous, now with strong continued blast
Beats on her side, and howls amidst her boughs;
Frequent the crackling branches bend, and wave
Convulsive to and fro; now yielding stoop
Before the whirlwind; now with force elastic
Rebounding, once again aspire to heaven.
Louder the tempest swells, the lab'ring roots
Scarce grasp the crumbling soil; now crashing break;
Prone falls the tree, and loads the groaning earth.

An ancient dame there was, to whom the charge
Of young Estrildis, when untimely death
Seiz'd on his fav'rite queen, great Humber gave.
She, when the chief unfurl'd his vent'rous sails,
And brav'd the terrors of a sea untried,
In quest of happier climes, and endless fame,
Follow'd her lovely pupil, and when low
The monarch lay, beneath the British sword,
The partner of her chains, she sooth'd her grief;
And now her fortune shar'd, for fair Estrildis
Priz'd her o'er all, and as a mother lov'd.

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Her name was Boarex. The conscious moon
Oft had beheld her, in her native wilds,
Tracing with mystic rites the Runic rhyme;
And oft had felt her pow'rful charms compell'd
To stoop reluctant from her cloudy throne,
And to a mortal's daring view lay bare
The dreadful secrets of the world unknown.
With grief she saw the queen, her darling care,
Oppress'd, and yielding to despair; she saw,
And lent her ready aid. At her command
Th' officious crowd retire. Approaching near,
Softly she kiss'd the mourner's cheek, and thus
With soothing words address'd. "And weeps my child,
Of me forgetful, and my faithful love;
Forgetful of the wonders of my art,
Which bends to my control the stubborn fates?
Yet lives thy Boarex, and while the blood
Flows in her aged veins, she lives for thee."
Raising her languid head, Estrildis said,
"What art, alas! can heal my wounded mind,

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Restore my innocence, recall the past?
Yet save my Locrine, and I bear to live."
"Daughter," she cried, "what frantic words are these?
No crime is thine, for 'tis no crime to love.
What though the banish'd Guendolen behold
With impotence of rage, and envious eyes,
Thy beauty grace her abdicated throne,
Exult, my child, and thank the bounteous gods,
Who crown with fair success thy noble love,
And bid the poor dejected captive rise
A glorious queen, and spurn her haughty foe.
Futurity's dark volumes to thy view
Soon shall my art unfold, and let fair hope
Glow on thy cheek, and lighten in thine eyes.
When the black frown of jealous Guendolen
Gloom'd on thy stolen joys, and with pale fear
Chill'd all the raptures of thy secret bower;
Frustrate by me, the ill to thee design'd
Recoil'd upon herself, and from her brow
I tore the diadem to beam on thine.

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And though Cornubia, arming in her cause,
Point all her vengeance at thy Locrine's head,
My spells can turn the thirsty dart aside,
And from the gloomy Hela's[1] drear abode
Call forth those dreadful ministers of wrath,
At whose approach the central earth is mov'd,
And the great sun grows pale." While yet she speaks,
Estrildis' colour glows, and fades, by turns.
Her bosom heaves with kindling hope, and fear
Subsides, and busy conscience stings no more.
Silent awhile she stood, and doubting still.
But Boarex, who with attentive eye
Had mark'd the secret workings of her mind.
Her rising spirit, and her bright'ning eyes,
Well knew her purpose gain'd, and ere the train
Of melancholy thought, and fears prophetic,
Could o'er her breast resume their sway, with words
Of cheering import, as might best confirm

[1] Hela was the goddess of death among the northern nations.

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Her hopes new entertain'd, she thus pursu'd.
"Not with vain sounds, my daughter, to beguile
Thy credulous ear, but with performance full
To satisfy thy wish, have I approach'd thee.
For this, when night descends, and o'er our heads
The moon rides high, upon the silent stream
Spreading her glimm'ring rays, and rightly call'd
Aids the slow-mutter'd charm, seek we the grove,
And with observance due, and powerful verse,
Invoke the dreadful deities, who weave
The fatal web.[k] Their potent ministers,
Slaughter, and flight, attend their high behest,
Spare whom they favour, won by sacrifice
And prayer, and whom they hate with death confound.
These shall befriend us. I will teach thy hand
To trace the backward spell, and by what art
Compell'd, the spirits that haunt the earth, or tend
The gliding wave, or play in floods of fire,

[k] See Gray's Poems.

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Or ride upon the stormy winds, assist
The dark designs, and work the will of man."
She ended, and Estrildis, re-assur'd,
And confident in hope, thus answer'd glad.
"Oh more than mother, who to second life
Hast wak'd me, sitting in the shade of death,
Or worse than death, in comfortless despair!"
Speaking she rose. Meanwhile th' attendant train
Pensive before the fair pavilion stood,
In silent expectation, and with tears
Deplor'd the sorrows of their queen; when lo
The sounding doors unfold, and forth she comes
Radiant with blooming beauty. Joy divine
Fills every breast, as when a god appears.
The veil, thrown backward from her heav'nly face,
Part loosely falling, in transparent folds,
Upon her snowy breast, which gently rose,
Half hid from mortal view the dazzling charm:
Part mingled graceful with her glossy hair,
Below her slender waist, in easy ringlets

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Flowing with artful negligence. Her eyes
Sparkled with liquid fire, and darted quick
Contagious madness, thrilling ecstasies,
And love inevitable. On her cheek
Sported the dimpled smile; and her sweet lips
Breathe fragrance, like the tepid breeze that steals
O'er eastern seas, and from his dewy wings
Shakes spices, and forewarns the mariner
Of Ceylon, or the rich Moluccan coast;
Or that which sooths th' Arabian youth, reclin'd
Beneath the spreading palm, and singing loud
In glowing numbers rapturous tales of love.
She moves like Venus, when expecting joy
She sought the Cyprian bow'r. Before her flew
Fair hope, and wanton mirth, and gay desire.
The waving myrtles bow'd their fragrant heads
In sign of worship, and the lovely rose
Put forth spontaneous, while the busy zephyr
Gather'd their several sweets, and wafted round
Ambrosial odours. Thither soon the graces,

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Join'd with the laughing loves, in mimic chains
Of roses wreath'd, their willing captive led,
The fair Adonis. Such the queen appears,
So moves, so looks, so smiles. Her virgins knew
Her mind to pleasure turn'd, and light disport.
Now breath'd the flute, and in melodious strains
Soft voices sung the praise of gentle May;
For that kind season now, with all her sweets,
And all her varied tints, the place adorn'd.
The place was such as poets feign'd of old
Hesperian gardens and Elysian scenes.
Here spread the level lawn, here gently flow'd
The silent river: from the brink uprose
The swelling hill thick clad with various trees.
Below, the poplar, and the dark-leav'd alder,
And the pale willow, whose depending boughs,
Mov'd by the sighing breeze, oft lightly sweep,
And sweeping, lightly mark the glassy surface.
But on the summit the majestic oak
Spreads wide his giant arms, the growth of ages.

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Here woods are pil'd on woods, hills over hills
Successive rise. These, sloping, gently sink
Into the vale beneath; while those abrupt
Frown o'er the mountain torrent, that now glides
With rapid course, and now o'er fragments huge
Of broken rocks, by the swift lightning's rage
Disjoin'd, or loosen'd by autumnal rains,
Across its channel thrown, indignant bounds
In foam. Here sunny plains extend, and there
Contracted vallies, dark with pendent woods,
Through which the gale sounds mournful, and the stream
Runs murmuring. Gloomy caves with moss o'ergrown,
The dripping grotto, and the bubbling spring,
Where fairies haunt. Now seen through distant trees
Glitters the rushing cataract. Rude rocks,
Enormous piles, and the vast mountain where
Upon the airy summit, to the foot
Of man impervious, high above the clouds her nest
The eagle builds, and hails the rising sun,
While yet the nether world is wrapp'd in night,

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Here close the scene. And here the opening glade
Invites the eye, while under arching boughs
Sudden appear the cheerful haunts of men;
The seats of industry; the cultur'd plain;
The smoke slow rising from the shelter'd cot;
And farther still the crowded city, whence
A thousand roofs, and glitt'ring domes, reflect
The Sun's meridian beam. The silver lake
Here spreads its lucid bosom, where the sail
Before the breeze scuds lightly; on the banks
Rise fair pavilions; flow'rs of various hues,
And various scents, mix'd with each blooming shrub
To Flora dear, in fair assemblage grow.

Such were the scenes th' enamour'd Locrine gave,
Th' abode of fair Estrildis, and of love.
There in soft ease, and ever-varied sports,
She nourish'd amorous thoughts, and fond desire.
Now sooth'd with airy music, now reclin'd
Upon the flow'ry couch, with roses crown'd,
She sees delighted, on the shaven turf,

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The nimble dancers tread their wanton maze.
Now in the gilded vessel, proudly gay
With purple streamers, floats; while from afar,
From various instruments, along the waves
Comes soften'd, stealing on the ravish'd ear,
The propagated harmony. Now swell
The notes distinct and clear; now die away,
As shifts the breeze reflected from the shore.
Thus till the night her sable wings extend,
And the fair moon provoke to mystic rites,
The lovely dame beguiles the ling'ring hours.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

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THE

REVENGE

OF

GUENDOLEN.

BOOK II.

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CATALOGUE of both Armies. Embassy from Locrine to the Cornubians. Lamentation of Guendolen.

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THE

REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

BOOK II.

With rapid march the bold Loëgrian youth
Advancing, leave the Avon far behind,
The Avon then a poor inglorious stream,
Nor grac'd with holy rites, nor poet's song.
Yet oft at eve the solitary swain,
That musing wander'd by the fringed bank,
And mark'd the moon-beam dancing on the wave,
Listen'd with wonder, and delighted awe,
While airy voices in his ravish'd ear
Breath'd sounds harmonious; and the sacred lyre,
Mov'd by the flying touch of hands unseen,
Gave forth her voice divine. For dear, ev'n then,

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Dear to the Muses flow'd the gentle stream:
Upon whose banks (while in enraptur'd strain
Prophetic, rang'd before th' eternal throne,
They sung the awful providence of Jove)
The mighty bard they saw, whose piercing eye,
So fate decreed, glancing from earth to heav'n,
With vast capacious spirit, unconfin'd,
Grasp'd universal nature, and beyond
The narrow limits of the world of sense,
On daring pinion soar'd: now sporting light
With mirthful fancy in the fields of air,
Marking the gambols of the elfin train:
Or with more potent voice, and magic song,
Moving the realms beneath: the yawning tomb
Gives up its dead, and hell, with all her pow'rs,
Trembling obeys the dreadful spell.
And now their banners wave by Isis' fount.
They pitch their tents. There to the mighty Thames,
With sacred incense, and libations due,
And offer'd hecatombs, their vows are paid.

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Slow move along the ranks the white-rob'd priests,
Sprinkling each warrior from the fountain pure:
And with uplifted eyes, and solemn words,
Pronounce the blessing of their guardian gods,
Bright Venus, slaught'ring Mars, and mighty Jove,
And Pallas worshipp'd by the waves of Sture,[1]
And great Apollo, and majestic Thames.
Now sable night descends, and downy sleep
Folds in his soft embrace the num'rous host:
But soon the morning dawns, the trumpets sound.
As when some swain, with rude unpractis'd hand,
Disturbs the nation in their waxen cells,
Forth swarms the troubled hive: so thick the troops
Rush from their tents: the echoing plain resounds
The clang of armour, and the shouts of men.
And now they coast the stream, which gliding smooth
Through fertile vallies, washes those fair walls
Sacred to bright-hair'd Phœbus, where three springs

[1] Shaftesbury, near the Sture, was anciently called Caer Paladur, or the temple of Pallas.

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Warm'd by his rays, with wond'rous virtues blest
To chase disease and pain, involv'd in mist
Smoke on the plain, and tell th' inhabitants
How grateful to the god their incense burns.
Two days they march. The third, Verlucio's walls
Receives them wearied: but the rising sun,
Again reflected from their burnish'd arms,
Beholds the moving thousands. Now they pass
The forest [m] vast, which glooms an horrid shade,
The scene of future slaughter. There the Saxon
Shall dye his conquering sword in British blood.
There England wage with Denmark dreadful war,
Now conquer'd, now triumphant; Ethelred
Now bite the ground, and noble Edmund now
Urge over heaps of slain his foaming steed.
But when six times the sun had ting'd with gold
The mountain tops, chasing the damps of night,
And now, from his meridian height declin'd,

[m] Selwood.

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Down tow'rd his western goal had shap'd his course,
They fix their station by the banks of Sture.
There sheath'd in arms, with thoughts of vengeance fir'd,
They found the gather'd pow'rs of Deunan's vales,
That dwell by Tamar's stream, and pleasant Teave,
Adorn'd with waving woods, where noble Orgar
In after days, entranc'd in holy vision,
Convers'd with heav'n; and where the Plym, now join'd
With rushing Tamar, meets the ocean's foam.
Oft on the margin of the flood, the Seer,
Rapt in prophetic ecstasy, beheld
Its future glories: lofty structures rise;
And on the heaving waves ride the huge bulk
Of mighty ships, of form unknown, and stor'd
With engines horrible, to shake beneath
The caverns of the deep with thunder's voice,
And awe with lightnings dread the subject sea.
Or to his wond'ring eyes confest appear'd
The awful form of Drake, on his designs
Intent; on whose majestic brow were seen

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Deep thought and firm resolve; and at his feet
Proud Spain lies prostrate; Mexico pours forth
Her wealth; and rich Peru her victor owns;
While eastern monarchs to the hero's fame
Pay willing homage. Next, from Armé's vales.
And those fair fields which fruitful Aune divides,
Where high Saint Michael's overlooks the main,
Appear the warlike youth. And where the Dart,
Through his bleak mountains and his craggy rocks,
Black with loud tempests, while the rushing torrent
Defiles his waters with the soil impure
Of heathy moor, rolls his indignant course:
Or, ling'ring now amidst his flow'ry meads,
Shaded with woods, with fragrant myrtle grac'd,
Smooth-gliding, and reluctant seeks the sea.
From Tinga, where the fear-struck Saxon first
Beheld the fierce invaders,[n] issuing forth

[n] The Danes first landed at Tinmouth; and the French, after the action off Beachy-Head, burnt the town and some fishing vessels in the harbour.

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From their black ships, and their portentous standard,
The magic Raven, beat the troubled air:
And where, in later days, vain-glorious France
Snatch'd a short triumph, soon to mourn in blood,
When on her stormy coast the British cross
Wav'd terrible, (the war brave Russell led,)
And her proud navies in her havens flam'd.
From Isca's banks, where the full river rolls,
With all his tributary waters swell'd,
And Moridunum sees her subject stream
Mix with the boundless sea, the martial bands
Advance. But from fair Mula's winding course,
From Isca's northern waves and Tavia's shores,
And that high promontory, which repels
The foaming tempests of th' Hibernian sea,
Nam'd, from th' immortal son of thund'ring Jove,
The Point of Hercules, no warriors came.
These with incursion swift, and vantage strong,
The foe possest, and crush'd the rising war.
Nor with less ardour from the blissful seats,

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Where, softly-breathing from the neighbouring main,
Reigns the warm breeze; ° where laughing Summer spreads
Perpetual joy, and gaily sporting throws,
With lavish hand, her rosy fragrance round,
While Winter frowns in vain, the youth appears.
From the swift Parrett they, and fruitful Thone,
And that cloud-piercing hill, the future theme
Of many a bard; but yet unknown to fame
Were Arthur's noble knights, and Arthur's deeds.
Six valiant chiefs the hardy bands obey'd:
Assaracus, whose name proclaims his race
Deriv'd from sacred Troy. To Britain's shore
He came with Brutus. On his manly limbs
The scars of many an honourable wound
Appear'd. Though age had silver'd o'er his hair,
Vig'rous he seem'd, and in his sinewy grasp
Brandish'd a pond'rous spear: before his host

° Somersetshire has been said to have its name from the mildness of the air, the land of Summer.

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Erect and firm he march'd; his armour rang.
With him his youthful son Chorœbus came.
Such Paris issued from the Scæan gate,
When, rous'd at length to daring deeds of arms
By Hector's just reproof, and Hector's fame,
Exulting Troy the graceful chief beheld.
Next Butes stood: skill'd with unerring aim
To launch the jav'lin from his nervous arm.
Achates next; and, matchless in the race,
Chaonian Pandrasus. Ere horrid war
Shook with his dire alarms th' astonish'd land,
In Avalon's [P] fair isle the hero dwelt;
Fair isle, fit emblem of his gen'rous mind.
For there the bounteous earth spontaneous gave
Her treasures forth. The blest inhabitant,
Reclin'd in od'rous shades, and in the ear
Of yielding virgin whisp'ring tales of love,
Inhal'd the smell of flow'rs, the violet,

P The isle of Avalon is said, in old authors, to produce fruits all the year round, and corn, &c. without culture.

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The cowslip, which the Fairy empress loves,
And the soft blushing rose; with ev'ry sweet
Which wanton Zephyr from the teeming earth
Wins by his warm caresses. All combin'd,
Invade the sense; for there perpetual Spring,
With Summer join'd, holds through the laughing year
Delightful empire; each luxuriant bough
Bends with Hesperian fruit, and courts the hand;
While the fair blossom to the ravish'd eye
Foretells the rich succession. Uther next,
Uther, the bravest of Loëgria's chiefs,
Advanc'd his giant limbs: great Uther, first
In dang'rous fight, in peace the just and good.
Awful the hero stood, by fate design'd
The mighty father of a line of kings,
Of great Pendragon, and his greater son.
But Deunan's warriors noble Turon led,
And hardy Malim of Phœnician race,
And sage Mempricius, whose deep-furrow'd brow,
Thinly o'erspread with hoary hair, confest

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The force of eighty winters. His weak arm
No longer lifts the spear, and swells the tide
Of slaughter; but in council wise, and skill'd
In all the stratagems of various war,
He guides more vig'rous youth to fair success.
From Ellandunum, and the fruitful shore
Of smooth Antona, and the plain where now
Fair Sarisburia's lofty spires arise;
From strong Verlucio's walls with turrets crown'd,
(Verlucio, seated by the gliding stream,
Amidst whose fields, with waving harvests gay,
Fair Plenty moves rejoicing,) Amber led,
In equal arms with godlike Dares join'd,
And equal sway, their yet unconquer'd bands.
Frome's rapid wave, and Durnovaria's walls,
And Vindogladia, and Alaunus' stream,
Send Durius, Leucon, Attys to the war.
The noble Durius in the field of death
Wields the strong lance, and rears the sev'nfold shield.
Leucon and Attys speed the flying dart,

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Or hurl destruction from the distant sling.
An hundred chiefs with princely Locrine came,
For dauntless courage fam'd, and martial skill.
But far the bravest, Galgacus was there,
And Ilus, sprung from great Æneas' line;
And Polydorus, of Achæan race,
Son of Euryalus, whom toils of war
Together borne, and hardy deeds achiev'd,
Had bound the friend of Brutus. When the chief
Unfurl'd his venturous sails, Euryalus
Forsook his native Greece, and with him led
His blooming Polydorus. O'er the rest
Hence was the hero grac'd in Locrine's court
With every honour. To his warm embrace
The Monarch gave the charms of Imogen,
His lovely sister; who now bath'd in tears
Laments her absent lord, or shrieking starts
From broken slumbers, and ill-boding dreams,
Dimly foreshewing future misery.

And now the heralds to the royal tent

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Summon Loëgria's leaders. Ev'ry chief
Assumes his place. High in the midst, the king
Superior sits enthron'd. Then Turon rose,
And, turning to the bold Deunanian chiefs,
Thus spoke his ardent soul. "At length, my friends,
Mars hears our pray'rs, and aids our just revenge.
Oh, with what anguish, when the fierce invader
Seiz'd our defenceless frontier, trusted weakly
To solemn treaties and Cornubian faith,
We saw our wealth, our cultivated plains
Seiz'd by th' insulting foe; our towns in flames;
The sacred temples of our gods profan'd
With impious violation! Then we wept
Upon our useless arms, which should have stream'd
With hostile blood, and with reluctant step
Before th' innumerous foe retir'd, not fled.
At length Loëgria's chiefs appear in arms.
Hear then my sentence, warriors. With the dawn
Seek we the foe. I brook disgrace no more."
He ceas'd. Then rising slow, the king extends

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His scepter'd hand, and thus dissembling speaks:
"This graceful ardour, Turon, well beseems
Thy vigorous years, and fits thy fame in arms.
Me too the voice of honourable praise
Delights: I kindle at the sound of war.
But ever should the ear of kings be clos'd
Against the syren Glory: then most happy,
Then greatest, when, by their paternal care
Preserv'd, their people bless their peaceful reign.
Hear then our just resolve. If thirst of wealth
Inflame the fierce Cornubian, and provoke
His hostile inroad on our country's peace;
Wealth I have store. Within my spacious hall
Spoils upon spoils in glitt'ring order pil'd,
From bleeding Greece, or from the boastful Gaul,
Torn in the bloody conflict, when the might
Of Brutus foil'd their bravest: nor alone
The spoils by Brutus won, my sword achiev'd
No vulgar trophies, when the Scythian chief
Bow'd in the dust his warlike head. All these

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Freely your king shall give, and more than these,
Resign his martial fame, to purchase peace,
And from his people turn the rage of war.
But who our offer to the foe shall bear?
Will great Assaracus, in arms renown'd?
Or sage Mempricius, from whose honied tongue
Persuasion flows?" He ended. With a frown
The stern Assaracus thus answer'd fierce,
And shook the hoary honours of his head,
"To others, king, commit th' ungrateful task:
If in the numerous host a slave be found
So poor of soul, so lost to sense of shame,
Degenerate prince! Not thus our noble sires
Su'd to confed'rate Greece; but with bold arms
Repell'd her fierce assault, and ten long years
Maintain'd the doubtful war with adverse heav'n.
Shall we, Loëgria's gather'd strength in arms,
Purchase precarious safety, and belie
Our honourable scars? Go thou, base prince!
Go ransom that unwarlike head, while we

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By hardy daring, and illustrious deeds,
Assert our ancient fame!" As when the gale
Slow rising, first invades the rustling leaves;
Now scarcely heard, now loud, and louder still
Swells on the ear the sullen sound, prophetic
Of the swift-rushing tempest: as he spoke
So rose th' indignant murmur. Ev'ry chief
Darts on the king his angry eyes. With joy
He marks their warlike ardour. Now arose
The hoary sage Mempricius, and at once
In mute attention all was hush'd around,
While thus experienc'd age discerning spoke.
"Blest is the monarch of the brave and free.
His throne is fix'd secure, and Fame for him
The laurel wreath prepares, th' immortal verse:
And blest the people, whom a prince commands
In action valiant, and in council wise.
These eyes, oh king, have seen thy crested helm
Flame like a meteor foremost in the war,
While, like the pestilence, thy dreadful sword

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Made armies fall. I wish'd my years renew'd
To emulate thy daring. Yet methought
Our youth, by thy example fir'd, display'd
Their fathers' spirit, and thy soaring flight
With no unequal wing pursu'd. They burn
With thirst of glory, and demand the war.
Ev'n hoary age beneath the pond'rous casque
Has crush'd his furrow'd brow. Shall coward fear,
Thought of precarious peace, and purchas'd safety,
Possess Loëgria, when Fame sounds th' alarm,
And Locrine leads the battle? Monarch, no.
Prove in the field our faith. Yet hear my counsel.
Pallas inspires my tongue. From Humber's stream,
The winding course of Trent, and where the Thames
Rolls his full tribute to the eastern main;
Ten thousand warriors by Elanius led,
Morindus, Elidurus, and the might
Of Britomarus, now with rapid march
Advance; and ere six times the sun has dipp'd

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His flaming axle in the western wave,
Their friendly banners, and their glitt'ring arms,
Shall greet our eyes. Let some illustrious chief,
Of high command, in solemn embassy
Approach Cornubia's leaders, thence to note
Their posture, strength, and number; (to prevail
By fraud or force, alike is victory,)
The cause of their fierce inroad to demand;
And with fair shew of words, and specious gloss,
Or else with terms allure, and proffer'd treaty,
To some suspense of war. So may our vengeance
Pour on their heads inevitable ruin."
Thus spake the wily chief. The king approv'd.
Mempricius, Malim, Galgacus, receive
The royal mandate. To the hostile camp
They bend their course: the heralds march before.
Beyond the hills of Mendip, where the soil
The grass nutritious, and the fragrant herb,
Yields rarely, but the ore of useful lead

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Repays with wealth immense the searchers toil;
And the fam'd cavern,[q] from whose mouth the voice
Of Fate oft speaks in thunder, or compell'd
With mystic rites, and spells of dreadful pow'r,
The regions of the gloomy dead give up
Their dreadful secrets, had Cornubia pass'd,
Vainly presumptuous, deeming to surprize
With swift incursion, in his secret bower
By Avon, and the stream to future times
By Sabra's fate renown'd, th' unguarded king.
But now the scouts report, the gather'd pow'rs
From Tamar to Alaunus, by the wave
Of Sture encamp'd, and Locrine's rapid march.
Cornubia's chief, Belinus, to Corineus
By kindred race allied, by friendship more;
Straight gives command, and with converted ensigns
The host moves onward, with impetuous course.
And now Ebrancus to the right his station

[q] Okey Hole.

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Fixes against the stream, which winding flows
By sacred Glastonbury, and the isle
Of fabled Avalon, and seeks the sea.
Hymner, Vigenius, Elidaucus, plant
Their banners on the left, where its dark shade
The forest spreads.[r] The middle space the bands
By Danius, Lago, and Molmutius led;
And those which under brave Rudaucus came;
Andragius, Urianus, and the strength
Of Brennus, fam'd for many an hardy deed,
Possess'd. With these in arms the marshal'd pow'rs
Of Capis, Ænus, and Bleduno join.
Catellus, and Gerontius, Leoline
By Pallas lov'd, the prudent and the brave.
And young Sisilius, whose well-practis'd limbs
Oft on the sand the sinewy wrestler foil'd.
And huge Gorbodion, fam'd for brutal strength,
But headstrong, fierce, inexorable: war

[r] Selwood.

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His sole delight, to cruel deeds inur'd.
Maglaunus, Peridurus: one on foot
Shakes in the foremost rank his mighty spear,
While two proud coursers, like the winds in speed,
Whirl bold Maglaunus o'er th' ensanguin'd plain,
Thron'd in the glitt'ring car. Now great Belinus
Darts o'er the growing camp his watchful eye,
And bids his legions round the vast extent
Raise the high rampart. In the trench profound,
Compell'd from his accustom'd bed, the stream
Reluctant flows. Each to his several post
The stated guards repair, and in six bands
Six valiant chiefs obey: Gorbodion, Capys,
Vigenius, Lago, godlike Leoline,
And Elidaucus, gay with golden arms.
And now Loëgria's embassy approach'd
Where Leoline held watch. The chief, who saw
The heralds' holy ensigns, and the troop
Few and unarm'd, springs from the mound, and bids
Unbar the massy gates; then mildly thus:

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"Whoe'er ye be, that thus in friendly guise
Approach our lines, by holy heralds led;
Fearless advance, and freely speak your purpose.
Dear to the gods, who see with pitying eyes
Man's wretched race, as emulous of woe,
Rushing with frantic rage to mutual slaughter,
Ye come, perhaps, the messengers of peace."
Mempricius thus replies, "Yes, generous chief,
Whose prudent words bespeak a noble mind,
We come, indeed, the messengers of peace,
From kingly Locrine, whose paternal eye
Grieving beholds the ills which threat his people.
Then lead us to Belinus; and convene
Cornubia's heroes, that th' assembled council
May learn our monarch's worth, and war no more
To impious fury urge our kindred swords."
He ended. Leoline thus answer'd glad.
"Whate'er thy message, be it peace or war,
We know, and we respect the sacred laws
Which heav'n prescribes the nations. Of safe conduct,

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And all observance meet, proceed secure.
If peace thou bring'st, most welcome: for we draw
The sword of justice, not of wild ambition."
So saying, on he march'd: Loëgria's heroes
Pursue his steps. The great Belinus now
Summons the leaders. His capacious tent
Receives the warlike train. High-thron'd o'er all
Appears their injur'd queen, and by her side
Her blooming son. In royal state she sate;
For since Persephone's relentless power
Extinguish'd great Corineus' noble life,
To her, his daughter, and her youthful Madan,
His people vow'd their homage. Next the throne
Belinus stood: the rest in order round.
Loëgria's chiefs advance: Mempricius thus
With studied speech the purpos'd fraud pursues.
"Princes, and leaders of Cornubia's pow'rs,
And thou great queen, before whose awful throne
We bow submissive; may th' immortal gods,
Upon whose nod the fates of empire wait,

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And kingdoms rise or fall, give to our words
Persuasion's winning charms; those charms which smooth
The brow of wrath, and of his cruel purpose
Beguile revenge! so may impartial reason
Decide between us, and the scourge of war
Pass from the nations! War, remorseless power,
Furious and blind, as violence or chance
Impels, the palm bestows; and on the ground
Humbling the just, bids pride and falsehood rise
On conquest's eagle pinion. But unblam'd
May we declare our message, and against
The throned state of sov'reign majesty
Urge our bold charge, as sacred justice bids?
Conscious of right, to you, illustrious chiefs,
The king submits his cause." Belinus then:
"Not urg'd by lust of war, nor blind obedience
To pow'r superior, sheath'd in arms we stand;
But foes to lawless force, and proud oppression.
Patient we hearken to thy pleaded reason."
Mempricius now resumes. "Thus Locrine bids,

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Say to Cornubia, o'er our peaceful realm
Why have your threat'ning armies pour'd dismay?
If we have exil'd from our throne and bed
The haughty Guendolen, our kingly pow'r
Might well, dependent on no foreign state,
Refuse th' account; but mov'd by love of peace,
And arm'd by justice, we provoke the trial.
Stand forth that guilty woman, whose vile arts
With spells, and dark conspiracy, assail'd
Her husband's throne and life. Before Cornubia
Our proofs produc'd shall vouch the charge: submission,
If lightly urg'd, atone. Or will she dare,
By white-rob'd priests in solemn order led,
Approach the charmed rock, which from its base
Self-mov'd inclines, when truth is near, and heav'n
To witness call? Till then suspend the war."
Mempricius ceas'd; and thus the queen replied,
While from her eyes insulted innocence
Flash'd lightnings. "Yes, we court the awful trial.
Connubial Juno, hear! hear, mighty Jove!

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Hear, righteous Themis! for you know my truth.
If without murmur, while my swelling heart
Almost to bursting throbb'd with anguish keen,
To have sustain'd my wrongs: if to have wept
My lonely nights upon a widow'd bed,
Yet taught my languid cheek to wear a smile
When next we met, though cold aversion scowl'd
Upon his alter'd brow: if to have waited
With fondest love and most attentive duty
Upon his will, and hop'd by patient bearing
To win upon his heart, and move his pity:
If this be dark conspiracy, if this
Be proud rebellion, I indeed am guilty.
Alas! and what has been the meed of patience?
Repeated insult, hard, unfeeling insult.
And, when exhausted cruelty supplied
No fiercer torture, last, disgraceful exile
And sland'rous accusation." More, in grief
And bitterness of soul, she would have said;
When brave Ebrancus, starting from the crowd,

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Thus spoke indignant: "Mighty queen, forbear.
We know thy virtues, and the tyrant's guilt.
Ev'n now, while here his solemn embassy
Mocks us with promise fair, and shew of peace,
And dares invoke th' immortal gods to witness:
His impious arts, his base dissimulation,
Those injur'd gods detect. The fraud is plain.
And does he deem us then so weak of mind,
Such easy novices, that, sooth'd by words,
We shall unbrace our armour, and lay by
Our righteous swords, which sacred justice draws?
Suspend the war? What, till th' extended realm
Which owns his sway, from all her provinces
Pours forth her armed sons to fight his battles?
No, let Cornubia back return defiance,
And hostile scorn. Ev'n now, our spies report,
Ten thousand warriors from their northern confines,
From Medway's banks, and Thames' majestic wave,
Urge their swift march. Retire, Loëgrian chiefs,
Your arts avail not. On your camp we pour

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Instant the vengeance of our injur'd queen,
If great Belinus give our fury way."
Ebrancus thus. Belinus thus replied:
"Well hast thou spoke, chief of Cornubian heroes,
Still first in action, still in council wise.
Mempricius, tell your king, his shallow arts
Protect his guilt no more, but by his sword
His safety must be purchas'd. Thy weak age
May need refreshment. Venerable man,
Enter our tent, and share the genial feast,
Thou and thy brave companions. Many a chief
To-morrow gluts the rage of sanguine war.
Then we may meet as foes. To-night at least
Accept the honours due to age and thee."
"No; to the king," the hoary warrior said,
"We bear thy answer; what the morn shall bring
We mourn, but fear not." Now the council rose.
Through all th' extended camp the troops indulge
The banquet, till the shades of night descend.
Not so the mournful Guendolen. Retir'd,

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Now flow her sorrows, now uncheck'd burst forth
Her sighs. Grief in her heaving bosom reigns
Despotic, nor admits divided sway.
And as from vernal skies the sudden show'r
Descends; or when beneath stern winter's reign,
All white with hoary frost, stands some old oak,
The monarch of the woods; touch'd by the beam
Of Phœbus, from th' innumerous boughs distils
The copious moisture: down her faded cheek
So tear succeeding tear incessant stream'd.
"Alas!" she cried, "and shall the rising sun
See hostile nations in fierce conflict join,
And the pure stream run purple with the blood
Of heroes, in my fatal quarrel slain?
Can love be won by cruel deeds of arms?
Can war's fell power rekindle soft desire?
Loathing I turn from the detested scene.
Oh be my witness, heaven! that not to me
Revenge is dear. For thee, for thee, my Locrine,
Though false, yet lov'd, pleas'd would I yield my life.

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But love and hope to me are lost for ever.
Me, wretched widow! Yet my husband lives,
Oh depth of misery! he lives another's.
Oh when shall I find refuge in the grave?
When close my weary eyes in death? In death
We know no grief, no pangs of slighted love."
Then, as she press'd to her maternal bosom
Her darling son, who, by her anguish mov'd,
Now join'd his tears with her's, "Alas! my child,
Robb'd of thy birthright, thou art exil'd too.
Oh boy, thou might'st have been a glorious king.
Who shall protect thee now? Thy cruel father,
Thy father is thy foe: and a vile Scythian
Upon the throne of Brutus (thine, my child,)
Shall sit, and mock thy suff'rings. Oh, for thee,
For thee alone I live; and but for thee,
Consign'd for ever to th' oblivious tomb,
My vengeance and my woes had slept together."
Her thus complaining, pitying heav'n beholds,
Beholds, and on her aching temples sheds

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The healing dew of sleep; for wearied now
Nature no more sustains her toil, but sinks
Exhausted. On the couch her graceful limbs
Are stretch'd supine. Meanwhile her spirit free
Expatiates, led by gods, in fields of air,
And in ecstatic vision dimly sees
The glories of her race—a line of kings
From Madan sprung. Now the warm ray of hope
Plays on her breast, and midst her peaceful slumbers
The smile of joy her languid cheek illumes.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

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THE

REVENGE

OF

GUENDOLEN.

BOOK III.

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THE Incantation, the Banquet. The Song of the Bard.

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THE

REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

BOOK III.

MEANWHILE despairing on her sleepless couch
Estrildis lies, and tears her cheeks bedew.
Forc'd from her head, the regal ornaments
Now soil their glitt'ring beauties in the dust.
And oft she smites her breast, and tears her hair,
And now the justice of the gods arraigns,
And now implores their mercy; but stern fate,
Her wild reproaches, and her fruitless pray'rs,
Scatters in empty air. Th' attendant train
Partake her sorrows, and the vaulted roof,
Vocal with song no more, or jocund sound
Of wanton revel, rings with loud lament.

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Ev'n Boarex, absorb'd in sullen grief,
Sits silent, and her baffled art deplores.
As when, of some proud city, girt with siege,
The forceful engine, or slow-working sap,
Has shook the lofty rampart, which now bows
From its foundations, now with thund'ring sound
Spreads wide its massy ruins: streets appear
Fair opening, rich, with glitt'ring fanes adorn'd,
And pillar'd domes, and fire the fierce assailants
With the near view of plunder. Here a band,
Pale with disease, and worn with toil, extend
Their feeble spears; despair is all their strength;
But far within, a lamentable train,
The timid virgin, and the widow'd matron,
And feeble age, and helpless infancy,
Cling to the altars, piercing oft the air,
Responsive to the dreadful notes without,
With fearful shrieks, as near, and now more near
The victors' shout, and dying groans arise.
Such was the general woe. For hope no more

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Dispens'd her sweet illusions. Dark despair,
And sacred horror ev'ry bosom fill'd,
Since that sad hour, when flush'd with expectation,
The eager step of fair Estrildis sought
The solemn grove, where Scythian Boarex
Adjur'd with mystic verse th' infernal pow'rs.
'Twas when the silent night in shadowy veil
Had wrapp'd the face of nature: softly sigh'd
The western breeze, responsive to the strain
Of the lorn nightingale: in cloudless majesty,
Amidst her starry train, the queen of night
Pursu'd her course rejoicing; shedding soft
Her silv'ry light on hill and grove: the earth
Blesses her gentle sway; and every herb
That drinks the dew, each flow'r, and fragrant shrub,
With grateful incense scents the passing air.
Then Boarex, th' impatient fair address'd.
"Behold, the season calls us. Now the pow'rs,
Propitious most, to mortal pray'rs attend.
Seek we the deep recesses of the grove,

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There learn the will of fate." She said; Estrildis
Replied not, but with hasty step advanc'd,
And beating heart. But ere the rites began,
Thus, as she pensive at the altar stood,
The mistress of the spell address'd the queen.
"Oh daughter, now with courage arm thy soul:
For dreadful are the rites; dreadful the gods;
Horrid their gloomy dwelling. The weak sense
Of mortals the dire vision scarce sustains."
Then rais'd her magic wand, and with fix'd eye
Intent, mutter'd the mystic verse, and trac'd
Upon the yielding sand the pow'rful spell.
And now the altars blaze, and now begins
The sacrifice, to earth, to night, and hell.
Strange, bloody, horrible! whence nature starts
Shudd'ring, nor dares the trembling Muse relate;
Less dreadful that Thyestean banquet, where
The sun recoil'd affrighted, measuring back
His heav'nly journey. Sinking with her fears,
Half dead, Estrildis stood, and with both hands

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Press'd to her eyes the veil. The lab'ring moon
Grows pale and dim; the stars retire; and now
The blast howls dismal: now the gather'd clouds
Roll on their gloomy volumes: darkness shrouds
The earth, and heaven's blue vault appears no more.
Such horrid darkness, when the hour is near,
Shall to the nations of the world foretell
The wreck of nature. Now the lightnings glare
Frequent: now rolls the thunder: peals on peals
Redoubled roar: trembles the solid earth.
The sorc'ress midst the tempest stands unmov'd,
And waves her wand, and chants the dreadful charm.
Now shakes the forest: now the lofty oak
Bows in the dust his head: the mountain nods
With all his rocks, and all his torrents hurls
A deluge on the plain: the rocking ground
Is mov'd beneath, as when the force of winds
Heaves the vast bosom of the mighty deep:
The cleft earth yawns, and from the dreadful chasm,
Burst flames: now horrid shrieks are heard, the yell

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Of torture: now appears the drear abode
Of Hela, the dark mansions of the dead.
There all the dreadful ministers of vengeance;
Fierce slaughter, dropping blood; disease and pain;
There discord, there the furies, there revenge;
There jealousy, terrific spectre! there
Pale famine's meagre form; with fell despair;
And there the dreadful deities,[s] who weave
The fatal web, of human entrails made;
The web of victory: the weights below
The heads of gasping warriors. Streaming blood
Smokes on the fiery soil beneath. They ply
Their horrid toil incessant, hymning still
Terrific strains, that doom the death of heroes.
Dire was their aspect: not portentous Gorgon
More dismal frown'd. Undaunted, fearless yet,
Confiding in her charms, the Scythian cries,
"Obey, ye gloomy pow'rs, obey the spell!

[s] The Valkyriur, or Chusers of the slain. See Gray's Poems.

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Give victory!" Now deeper thunders roll'd:
Hell grew more dreadful: bickering flames shot forth,
Wreath'd with dark clouds of smoke. Then first
The sorceress knew fear: and then a voice,
More loud than shouting armies, or the roar
Of the vext seas, with rushing storms combin'd,
Broke on her ear. "Oh insolent and vain!
Shall mortals then prescribe the course of fate?
Thou who would'st pierce the secrets of the gods,
Hear thou, and tremble. Miserable wretch,
What is thy boasted art? Their instrument,
To work their firm, inscrutable decrees.
The meek and humble mind the fav'ring pow'rs
Well-pleas'd behold. Rebellious arrogance
At length their thunder visits. Seek no more
What known will curse thee. The dread pow'rs of hell
What force can bind? what pray'rs or tears can move?"
Terrific Mista spoke, and at her voice
Hell shakes, and earth and heav'n recoil dismay'd.
Now fled the horrid vision. The rude storm

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Is hush'd: no more the thunder rolls: the stream
Glides in its wonted bed; and the fair moon,
With all her starry train, again shines forth.
Again the soft-complaining nightingale
Breathes heav'nly music on the ear of night.
But prone on earth the miserable queen,
Pale, motionless, almost of sense bereav'd,
Lay chill'd with terror; when with trembling step,
And fault'ring tongue, sad Boarex approach'd,
She rais'd the mourner's head, and fondly tried
(Though from her breast unbidden burst the sigh,
And oft the starting tear was check'd in vain,)
With soothing words to chear her fainting soul.
"Daughter, restrain thy sorrows," (thus she cried,)
"The spell has lost its force, but the dread gods,
Mov'd by the voice of pray'r, and milder rites,
Perhaps will bend relenting. Heard'st thou not
That awful voice—'The meek and humble mind
'The pow'rs well-pleas'd behold?' Approach we then
Suppliant the altar; groveling on the ground,

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Wetting the earth with tears, with frequent sighs
Moving the air, and beat our wretched breasts,
And rend our scatter'd hair. No other hope,
No other refuge now remains, if pray'rs,
And tears, and sighs, are pour'd to heav'n in vain."
She said, and with disorder'd step and look
Mov'd to the altar, which her hands so late
With impious rites, and horrid sacrifice,
Polluted, and with pure ablutions cleans'd
From blood; then heap'd with incense, and applied
The fire. Now rolling in the dust, she pray'd,
She wept: Estrildis answer'd groan for groan,
And clasp'd her hands in speechless agony,
And beat her breast, and rent her scatter'd hair,
And pray'd, and wept, and sigh'd. But tears, and pray'rs,
And sighs, are pour'd in vain. The struggling flame
Sinks down, and now involv'd in smoke expires.
Signs from above ensu'd, earth groan'd beneath,
Blue lightnings gleam'd, and thunder shook the sky.
Then vanish'd every hope: then silent grief,

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And black despair's impenetrable gloom,
Possess'd them whole. With feeble step, and slow,
They quit the fatal place. Th' attendant train
Behold amaz'd their alter'd looks, that shone
So late with airy hope, and festive joy,
Nor dare the cause explore. Now all around
That favour'd bow'r, where nature vied with art,
Where Cupids sported in each balmy breeze,
And pleasure led the jocund hours along,
Pale sorrow reigns, and shrieks are heard of woe.
As some fond mother, o'er her darling child,
(When now the pale consumption on its youth
Untimely preys, and the worn lungs refuse
Their office) hangs in speechless agony,
Marking the slow approach of death; and now
Bathes its wan cheek with tears; on its pale lips
Prints kisses; and if chance a transient glow
The flushing fever spreads, her eager hope
Deems it the promise of returning health:
But soon the fond delusive hope expires;

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Tears stream afresh; and with more dreadful sway
Despair again comes rushing on her soul.
So mourn'd Estrildis for her vanish'd joys,
And with such horrors view'd impending fate.
Loëgria's envoys now had reach'd their camp,
And to their king announc'd approaching war.
Then rose th' undaunted chief, and forth he mov'd
Majestic. In his hand the sceptre shone,
Ensign of high command, and from his helm,
Dreadful with nodding plumes, quick lightnings flash'd.
Earth shook beneath him. At his word, the sound
Of clanging trumpets bids the troops repair
Each to his standard. Now the echoing plain,
Throng'd with the moving thousands, seems on fire:
So thick the polish'd helms, and blazing shields
Reflect the sun's declining rays. He mounts
His high tribunal, thence awhile surveys
The host, then awful rises. On their king
They gaze with wond'ring eyes. He seems a god,
As when the father of the tuneful strain,

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Sprung from the Muse, whom all the Muse inspir'd,
Threïcian Orpheus, on the rugged brow
Of Rhodope or Hæmus first appear'd:
By thousands and ten thousands, from their caves,
And gloomy forests, the rude nations flock'd,
With fond devotion to the moral lay
Attentive, while their bosoms catch the flame
Of virtue, till that hour unknown to man:
Not with less awe Loëgria's armed sons
Gaze on their chief, and from his eagle eye,
And bold demeanour, in their kindling souls
Imbibe heroic ardour. "Warlike chiefs,
Support and glory of Loëgria's throne,
(The king exclaims,) these firm, well-order'd ranks,
Their prompt obedience, and their eager zeal,
Proclaim your martial skill, your faith unshaken.
To sheath the ruthless sword of civil slaughter,
To spare my people, with paternal care
In vain I strove. Insatiable ambition,
And lawless force, nor nature's sacred ties

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Restrain, nor pleaded justice. Fierce Cornubia
Points at a kindred breast the guilty steel.
I fondly hop'd to have reserv'd your fire
For nobler deeds. O'er other worlds to spread
Our Trojan name, with other trophies grac'd.
Not so the gods decree. No more I check
Your ardour. Let the morning's orient beam
Play on your armour, moving to the fight.
Brave must he be, and of no vulgar force,
To whom your chief shall yield the prize of fame.
There, where the plumage of my crested helm
Shakes o'er the breaking squadrons wild dismay,
There fix your eyes; be that your guiding star,
Secure it leads to conquest and to fame."
He ceas'd. From man to man, from rank to rank,
Spreads swift applause: a murm'ring sound arose,
Like billows breaking on the distant shore,
Or winds that sing along the narrow vale,
By two cloud-piercing mountains form'd, whose sides
Rugged with rocks, and dark with woods, appear

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To threaten fierce encounter. Now the leaders,
Approaching, hear the king's command. The troops
Divide: these marching to their tents prepare
Their evening banquet. Their allotted posts,
From space to space, along th' extended rampart,
The guards possess. Of these a chosen band,
By Dares, Leucon, Ilus, chiefs of name,
Conducted, far beyond the trench encamp,
And spread their watchful scouts around, to mark
The foe, if in their guarded tents they pass
The hours of night, or with excursion swift
Attempt surprize. But in the royal tent
The leaders meet. Meanwhile th' attendant train
With dainties heap the board; the golden bowl
Foams with the generous wine; to Jove they pour
Libation, and indulge the genial feast:
Nor wanted tuneful harp, nor sacred song.
Above the rest the tuneful bard appears.
He sung the noble deeds of other days,
The glory of their fathers. Fix'd around

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In mute attention sate the kindling heroes;
And as the mighty master touch'd the lyre,
Their glowing bosoms heave with thirst of praise.
From sacred Troy the lofty strain began,
When fierce Minerva wrapp'd her walls in flames.
And next he sang, whom Juno's wrath pursu'd,[t]
Unnumber'd perils destin'd to sustain,
Now tost by tempests, now by arms assail'd;
Till, led by fate to Latium's promis'd shore,
Th' Ausonian bride his finish'd toil rewards.
But when the sire of gods, by Venus mov'd,
In the blest synod of th' eternal pow'rs,
Receiv'd the favour'd hero, (where he sits
With great Alcides, Jove's all-conqu'ring son,
Grac'd with immortal youth,) Ascanius fill'd
The Latian throne. And now the poet sung
Silvius, enamour'd of the beauteous dame.
The beauteous dame deriv'd her race divine

[t] Æneas.

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From Faunus, long in Latian realms ador'd,
And hoary Saturn, Jove's immortal sire.
They lov'd in secret, till her swelling waist
Their stolen joys betray'd. Then prophets sung
Portentous strains. At length, foredoom'd the babe
Of those who gave him life, a guiltless parricide,
Sprung into light the fatal babe. Amidst
Lucina's throes the mother dies; the sire,
Pierc'd in the silvan chace, distains with blood
His son's keen arrow, by the furies turn'd
Wide from its aim. For this disastrous deed
The son, ill-fated, fled th' Ausonian reign,
And roam'd an exile in a foreign land,
In far Chaonia. There, by thirst of fame
Impell'd, and fir'd to high, heroic deeds,
He glean'd the relics of the Trojan name,
And shook astonish'd Greece with dire alarms.
Thence led by heav'n his vent'rous sails unfurl'd,
And prest the bosom of the stormy deep,
A new Æneas. Now with daring prow,

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Full of the god, he stems the raging wave;
Now dyes with hostile blood th' Iberian strand;
Now proud with Gallic spoils. At length appears
The western isle, the period of his toils:
For thus from Leogecia's holy fane,
(Fair Leogecia, once to Cynthia dear,
Till, rous'd to vengeance by an impious race,
She whelm'd the bloomy region in the main.)
The virgin huntress spoke the will of fate:
" Amidst the western waves, an isle explore,
There fix thy empire, Brutus, and thy name.
There through futurity's dim mists I see
A mighty nation, great in arts and arms;
O'ercome by whose transcendent glory, fades
The promis'd lustre of the Roman name.
Hail, happy Britain! hail, belov'd of heav'n!
Immortal mother of the brave and free!"
Thus spoke the goddess of the fatal bow;
Nor were her oracles believ'd in vain:
For as the fleet approach'd the destin'd shore,

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The winds were hush'd, and every heaving wave
Subsided. Mov'd by some superior pow'r,
(As if the genius of the land confess'd
Its future lords) the prows divide the deep,
Nor urg'd by sounding oar nor swelling sail.
Then fierce Bellona shakes her flaming brand,
And dreadful deeds are done. In horrent arms
Stood the proud foe: their stature reach'd the sky.
Not that Titanian race more fell, who heap'd
Pelion on Ossa, and defy'd the highest.
Then rush to war the martial race of Troy;
There great Assaracus, brave Turon there,
And there Corineus wields his fatal lance:
There Brutus like a god appears; and now
Directs the storm, and marks the course of death;
Now lifts his mighty arm, and hurls his thunder.
The savage foe fled howling to their hills,
And trembled in their rocky caves. Their hills,
Their rocky caves are storm'd; nor more secure
The forests' gloomy depth. Fair peace at length

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Receives the warriors in her soft embrace,
And Ceres crowns their fields. Another Troy
Now rises, empress of the western world.
Her lofty structures, and her glitt'ring fanes,
The mighty stream, that rolls majestic by,
Surveys, exulting in his future fame.
But now the bard awakens all his fires,
And sweeps with bolder rage the sounding strings;
Invokes the Muse to aid his daring song,
And feels the goddess present at his call.
With glowing bosom, and with sparkling eyes,
The monarch listen'd to the lofty strain.
He sung the hero of the frozen north.
Now pouring dreadful from a thousand ships
His savage warriors on Albania's shore.
How fierce the conflict, by the foaming main,
When Britain fled, and Albanact expir'd!
Mount, haughty Scythian, mount thy lofty decks,
And spread each canvas to the fav'ring gale.
Behold, he comes, the great avenger comes,

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Like Phœbus, dreadful with his silver bow,
When from Olympus, clad in gloomy night,
Fierce he descends, and blasts the guilty world
With pestilence. Now swells the shout of war,
The tumult thickens, and the combat burns:
Mars bathes in human blood; the dismal field
Is wrapp'd in darkness, and a sanguine cloud;
O'er heaps of slain the foaming river roars;
And Jove with thunder rends the troubled air.
Fierce in the van the dreadful chief appears,
Victorious Locrine, Brutus' matchless son;
Through breaking ranks his furious course he drives,
And slaughter'd heroes strew the plain beneath.
Before him moves his brother's gloomy shade,
And bares his recent wound, and points the foe.
Then flies the spear, and then the mighty falls.
As when some haughty chief, his foe subdu'd,
The captive navy in proud triumph leads,
And rashly boasts unconquerable force:
Sudden the hurricane descends: the sea

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Roars dreadful, and a foaming deluge hurls
Upon the bursting decks: the shatter'd ships
Yield to the storm, and the remorseless deep
Howls, closing o'er their masts: so Humber falls,
And all his boasted triumphs are no more.
In vain Estrildis for her sire's return
Prepares the grateful bath, and spreads the board;
Her sire returns not, pale and cold in death.

Thus sung the bard, and wak'd the rage of war.
Each beating bosom claim'd the promis'd fight:
Each ardent warrior grasp'd his shining shield,
And pois'd the spear, or half unsheath'd the sword;
Anxious they wish the morning's rising light,
And dreams of conquest in their fancy play.
In thought they see Cornubia's baffled pow'rs
By pale confusion seiz'd, and wild dismay,
While fierce behind incens'd Loëgria storms.
Oh blind to fate! what shades of heroes slain
The morn shall send to Pluto's dreary coasts!
How many widows mourn their slaughter'd lords,

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While sad Loëgria bleeds at ev'ry vein!
Buoy'd by presumptuous pride, in vain they hope
For heav'nly aid in an unrighteous cause;
But confident in strength, nor victims slain,
Nor vows, nor pray'rs, appease the offended pow'rs.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

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THE

REVENGE

OF

GUENDOLEN.

BOOK IV.

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The Hall of Odin. The Battle. The Truce. The Death of Locrine.

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THE

REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

BOOK IV.

Now earth was wrapp'd in night, and with soft hand
Sleep shed o'er human woe his balmy dew.
But where, surrounded by his vassal gods,
The mighty father of the battle sits,
In golden goblets quaffing generous wine,[u]
The heav'nly synod meets. The sounding hall
Unfolds her countless gates, and shakes throughout
With thronging feet, and din of clattering arms.

[u] Odin is thus described by the northern mythologists.

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Before the throne of Odin rang'd appear
The ministers of his almighty will.
There stood the Destinies,[x] whose piercing eyes
The past, the present, and the future view,
And, on the father's sovereign nod intent,
Mark as he bids, in their eternal roll,
The chequer'd course of man's eventful life.
Next these, the dreadful Sisters,[y] they who bathe
In blood, by whom the warring heroes fall.
Each in her right sustain'd the pond'rous spear,
And from her left the polish'd shield display'd
Portentous splendor. On each gloomy brow
Frown'd the fierce rage of war, the lust of slaughter;
And by the side of each a lofty steed,
Caparison'd and harness'd for the field,
Appear'd, in colour like the solemn night,
When with collected vapours wintry storms

[x] The name of the Nornir, or Parcæ of the northern nations, signified the past, present, and future.

[y] The Valkyriur, or Chusers of the slain.

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Have quench'd the lunar ray, and veil'd the stars:
Whose eyes shot lightnings; wreaths of curling smoke
Roll'd from whose nostrils, mix'd with bickering flames;
And from whose flanks a pair of mighty wings
Stretch'd far their shadows, upon which upborne
The sisters ride the tempest, when the sire
Spreads o'er a thousand realms the waste of war.
High in the midst appear'd the sovereign throne
Flaming with gold, and rich with glitt'ring gems:
And all around the blaze of polish'd steel,
Swords, lances, shields, pour'd in exhaustless stream
Unutterable splendor, to sustain
Whose fierceness the frail sense of mortal sight
Must fail. With honours scarce inferior grac'd,
Beside the father, the majestic queen
His fruitful spouse was plac'd, and next to her
The thunder-bearing Thor, their conqu'ring son.
On either hand, in equal ranks dispos'd,
Eight golden thrones sustain'd in awful state
As many deities. Now all were met,

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All but the guard of that celestial fort [z]
Which fronts the wond'rous bridge, whose pow'r controls
Heav'n's furious foes, and awes the giant crew.
Myriads of spirits of inferior class
Throng in th' exterior courts, and mighty chiefs,
Renown'd in arms, in glorious battle slain.[a]
Now from the caverns of the gloomy north
Rush forth the tempests. Now the vaulted roof
Shakes through each vast recess, each pillar'd ile;
And moving with the blast, the shields, the swords,
In glitt'ring order beaming from the walls,
Clash horrible. The ministers of fate
Know the dire signs of Odin's wrath awak'd,
Spring to their steeds, and shake their threat'ning spears.
Before the throne a form majestic stands;
His batter'd armour, and his riven shield

[z] Heimdall. The principal gods of the northern mythology were twelve in number. The giants were the perpetual enemies of the gods. See Northern Antiquities.

[a] All who died in battle had immediate admission to the hall of Odin.

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Yet stain'd with blood, proclaim his glorious toils
In many a well-fought field; but on his breast
Appears the semblance of a ghastly wound,
And discontent frowns on his sullen brow.
"How long," he cries, "is Humber doom'd to mourn?
How long defrauded of his just revenge?"
Then with a voice that shook the vaulted heav'n,
And mov'd the firm foundations of the world,
The sire of gods replies: "My son,[b] thy pray'r
Is heard; the promis'd vengeance comes at length.
Go forth, ye sisters, urge your winged steeds,
And bid the dreadful goddess of the dead,
The gloomy Hela, all her flames prepare,
Wake all her horrors, all her furies rouse.
Bid the sad subjects of her mournful reign
Forget their pains awhile, to meet their guest;
Such as before ne'er trod that horrid soil,
One great in arms, with wreaths of conquest crown'd."

[b] All the princes of the Gothic nations were fond of deriving their descent from Odin.

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Swift at the word the dreadful sisters flew,
Where the nine portals of the drear abode
Arise, and, seated on her ebon throne,
The gloomy goddess reigns in dreadful pomp,
And gluts her cruel ears with cries and groans.
She hears with joy, if joy in hell can be.
The dog of darkness spreads his fangs,[c] sets wide
His jaws, distilling foam and human blood,
And hopes the prey. The furies howl applause.
Wak'd by the circling hours, the rosy dawn
Beam'd from the glowing east. Now hell unfolds
Her gates, and, riding on the storm, rush forth
The dreadful sisters. As they move, the air
Is darken'd, and the conscious earth beneath
Shakes to its centre. Now upon the banks
Of Sture, they cease their flight, and lift their voice.
Rous'd by the thrilling sound, both armies start
From sleep, and on the echoing plain pour forth

[c] He fed upon the lives of those who perished by violence.

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Their myriads. Helms on helms, and shields on shields,
In long succession. Throng'd with glitt'ring spears
The plain appears to move. As when the gale,
When now rich Autumn's hand has ting'd the fields
Through all their wide extent with golden hues,
Sweeps o'er the rip'ning grain; now here now there
Impell'd, as Zephyrus or Notus breathes,
Waves quick the yielding corn; here driven on heaps
The creaking blades encounter, and behind
A void appears, which soon the breeze supplies.
Now tumult rises; now the sound is heard
Of dreadful preparation; ringing shrill
The clatt'ring armour; the fierce soldiers shout;
The leaders loud command; the trumpets' clang
Pierces the troubled air; the scythed car
Rolls o'er the plain in thunder; far and wide
To right, to left, the growing ranks extend;
And now appears in all its dreadful pomp
The regulated war. An awful pause
Ensues: terrific silence! Ev'ry breast

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Glowing with martial fury pants for battle.
Frowning they stand, impatient for the signal,
Like hounds, whom, vers'd in every silvan art,
Some huntsman to the furzy brake conducts,
The haunt well known of their accustom'd game:
Now at the covert's verge, their glowing eyes
Flash lightnings, and their bristling hair erect
Speaks their tumultuous joy: their lashing tails,
Beat on their panting sides: they tread in air,
And now prepare to spring; but aw'd, repress
Their fury, on their master's eye intent
Gazing, and waiting his commanding voice.
Before Cornubia's ranks Belinus moves,
And every chief incites to noble deeds.
"Warriors, be mindful of your ancient fame.
Rouse all your strength, and waken all your fires.
Brave is the foe. To all your triumphs past,
On Gallia's plains, and proud Iberia's shore,
To vanquish'd Greece, and that gigantic race
Foil'd in the conflict, while they boast in vain

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Their prowess more than human, this blest morn,
By heav'n with each auspicious omen grac'd,
Shall add a nobler conquest." Silent all
Attend: their bosoms glow with generous rage.
With equal ardour in refulgent arms
Loëgria's heroes drest their manly limbs.
There Turon shook his formidable lance:
There Ilus frown'd: there Galgacus appear'd,
Proud of unnumber'd trophies: there the shield
Of noble Uther on th' astonish'd foe
Portentous gleam'd: there great Assaracus
Surveys with practis'd eye the marshall'd files.
Above the rest, with manly grace adorn'd,
The monarch tow'rs, and from his glitt'ring car
With eyes on fire, and thund'ring voice, awakes
The ling'ring war, and pours in every breast
The rage of fight, and proud contempt of death.
"Warriors, at length the day ye wish'd appears.
Lo! sheath'd in arms, Cornubia's hostile pow'rs!
Lives there, whose soul, to shameful fear resign'd,

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Shrinks from the glorious dangers of the war,
And doubts to mingle where the battle burns?
Hear, Jove, and Pallas! by this hand he dies.
But ye whom fame's immortal glories fire,
Now prove your might, and emulate your king."
Then from his car, upon the sounding plain
Sprung the brave chief, and rush'd against the foe.
As the red meteor in the troubled air
Appears, the dread forerunner of the storm;
Such from his arms the dismal splendors glar'd.
And as across the blue expanse of heav'n
A star swift shooting darts its lengthen'd light;
Such was his course, as, gathering strength to throw,
The hero shook aloft his fatal spear.
Now wing'd with death, he speeds the rapid dart,
The point lies buried in Bledyno's breast.
Prone on the ground the grasping warrior falls,
And grasps with strong convulsive pangs the dust.
Cornubia mourns her slaughter'd chief. At once
A thousand jav'lins from a thousand hands

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Rain dreadful. With extended arm the king
Bears on his sounding shield the rattling storm;
And presses dauntless on. And now begins
The conflict: shield to shield, and lance to lance
Oppos'd: now rings the batter'd armour: now
The shout of fierce success, the dying groan,
Mingle their horrors: now the snorting steeds
O'er mangled limbs of noble warriors slain
Whirl the swift car, and bathe their hoofs in blood.
O'er the disastrous field, the gloomy pow'rs
That guide the course of slaughter, and delight
In human woe, ride on the stormy clouds,
And, as the tide of conquest drives, to these,
And now to these, reveal their dreadful forms.
Then pale confusion, fear, and shameful flight,
Seizes the bravest; then the mighty fall.

Oh say, bright parent of immortal verse!
Say, memory! what chiefs renown'd in arms
The sword of Locrine mingled with the dead.
First Lago fell; Vigenius next expir'd;

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Pierc'd through the shoulder as he turns for flight,
Andragius bites the ground; Molmutius next
Writhes in the pangs of death, for wisdom fam'd,
And skill'd with various eloquence to sooth
Each stormy passion, and the fierce and proud
Beneath the sway of justice teach to bow:
But vain is eloquence, and wisdom vain,
When ruthless war unsheaths his slaught'ring sword.
His death with grief the brave Rudaucus views,
Springs from the ranks, and shakes his threat'ning lance:
The king beholds him, and exclaims aloud:
"Wretch! dost thou dare my waken'd rage to tempt?
On the cold earth Molmutius bleeding lies,
Could not that arm thy lov'd companion save?
Then share his fate. This mercy I bestow,
My spear shall join thee with thy friend in death."
While yet he speaks, the strong Cornubian lance
Sings on direct. Th' impenetrable shield
His left extends, and disappoints the blow:
At the same instant, with no doubtful aim,

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While yet Rudaucus from his flying dart
Expects immortal fame, and marks its course,
His right impels the jav'lin. In his groin
Sudden Rudaucus feels the piercing steel.
Stagg'ring he back recoils; before his eyes
The shades of death are spread. Loëgria's chief
Draws his bright sword, and rushes to destroy.
In vain. At once an hundred guardian arms
Extend their covering shields, and pour at once
An hundred darts against the monarch's head.
But not as yet hell's dreadful ministers
Had, in the course of time prescrib'd, led on
Th' appointed minute; and each thirsty dart,
Turn'd by their breath, or by their sable shields
Repell'd, falls harmless. Full of wrath, he sees
His conquest ravish'd, and with thund'ring voice
Pursues the foe, and fires his martial bands,
Then bathes his slaught'ring sword in vulgar gore.
Nor less Belinus to revenge incites
His heroes. Ev'ry kindling bosom glows

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With noble heat, and mighty lust of fame.
And first, where tow'ring in the foremost rank
The might of Butes stood, Gerontius mark'd,
And aim'd the deadly jav'lin. Sounding shrill
It flew, and pierc'd the warrior's neck. He falls
Prone on the plain. Loëgria's troops behold
Their bravest slain, and smit with panic fear
Recede: th' exulting victor bears the spoil.
Next Durius fell, pierc'd by Catellus' dart;
Not unreveng'd, for warlike Leucon saw,
And with swift motion whirling round dismiss'd
The polish'd pebble from the rapid sling.
Maglaunus feels its force, while on his car
Sublime, the boaster vaunts his matchless arm.
By Elidaucus Phrygian Dares fell:
Griev'd at the sight, and ardent for revenge,
The noble Ilus rear'd his mighty lance;
But satiate with the praise already won,
The wary chief within the lines retir'd,
Nor brav'd superior force. Alternate thus

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The fortune of the battle ebbs and flows,
And now Loëgria, now Cornubia bleeds.
Now paus'd the fight. A narrow space divides
The warring nations, and the rattling storm
Of flying darts subsides: but here and there
Some arm unbidden hurls the random spear:
Meanwhile, on either hand the chiefs repair
The ranks disorder'd. Now again the blast
Of the shrill trumpet, and the shout confus'd
Of charging myriads, with the clank of arms,
And sound of rushing feet, pierces the air.
The tumult thickens: now the keen-edg'd sword
Is bath'd in blood; the slaughter grows around,
Wounded they wound, and dying they destroy.
As when the sea, in narrow channel pent,
Where Cambria's mountains lift their snow-clad heads,
And overlook Eblana's distant bay,
By strong attraction rais'd, on either hand
Wins on the shore, and ebbing now retires,
Till in the middle way the meeting waves

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Encounter, and in foaming conflict join'd,
Loud roars the furious surge, and mounts to heav'n.
Or, as of old, when that Arabian gulf
Into his oozy bed the chosen seed
Receiv'd, while his disparted waves, upheld
By pow'r divine, on either side appear'd
High-rais'd stupendous, like th' embattled wall
Of some imperial city: vaunting loud,
The rash Ægyptian pours in fierce pursuit
Innumerable force of chariots arm'd,
Horsemen, and foot, that shake the spear, or draw
The sounding bow, into the dreadful void.
Then, at th' Almighty bidding, to their bed
Accustom'd rush the whelming waters: loud
They roar, and louder far, than when the storm
Rolls on in thunder through the darken'd air;
Not less the horrid din, when Ætna howls
Through all her caverns with sulphureous flames,
Mix'd with the groans of that rebellious crew
Who warr'd with heaven. Upon the foaming waves

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Arms, chariots, ensigns of proud war, appear
At random tost, and floating carcases
Attest Almighty wrath, and baffled pride.
And now two chiefs of force immense, whose spears
Wide-wasting had with many an inroad gor'd
The front of battle, in their sanguine course,
Approach, and adverse stand with threat'ning arms.
On either side the troops retiring yield
Space for the conflict, and with eager eyes
And awful silence wait th' impending fight.
As when a comet through the darken'd air
Blazes portentous with disastrous fires;
And some bright planet in his rapid course
Threatens with fierce encounter, or fix'd star
To hurl from his appointed seat; dismay'd
The nations view the dreadful prodigy,
And wait the ruin of conflicting worlds.
So gaz'd both armies, when his lifted spear
Brave Leoline withdrew, and thus began.
" Illustrious Uther, in this sanguine field

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Say, does thy breast with wonted ardour glow;
While the keen point of thy victorious spear
Is bath'd in kindred blood, and all around
The race of Troy by mutual wounds expire?
We too, in league of friendship once conjoin'd,
Who shar'd the rites of hospitable Jove,
The mantling goblet, and the festal board,
Now with blind fury, lift our impious arms
Against each other's life."—"Alas! my friend,"
The noble Uther with a sigh return'd,
"Avails it aught in war's relentless ear
To pour the lenient balm of prudent speech?
Sweet pity's voice amidst the battle's roar
Unnotic'd dies away, and Justice speaks
Her high command in vain. But what are we,
Whom nor resentment keen of suffer'd wrong,
Nor pride of pow'r defy'd, incites to arms,
But base submission to superior sway?
No more I lift the guilty spear. I mourn
My fatal triumphs, nor the palm of fame

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Dare claim from actions, which my soul abhors.
Some god, my friend, some god thy breast inspir'd
To sheath the sword, and give the nations peace.
Bid we the conflict end." While yet he speaks,
Glad Leoline restrains the rushing bands.
Along the lines the rage of war subsides.

Now o'er the dismal field, with carnage red,
Terrific Mista roll'd her gloomy eyes.
"Enough," she cried, "has stream'd of vulgar blood.
The hour approaches. Hela's drear abode
Unfolds its vast, and ever-during gates,
And all her shadowy reign is mov'd throughout.
Sisters, prepare the fatal web; prepare
The pow'rful song." The dreadful deities
Each at the word bestrides her sable steed,
Hilda, and Sangrida, abhorred forms,
Besmear'd with blood: Geira, and Gondula,
And the dark frown of Hiortharimula,
At whose dire aspect nature shrinks appall'd,
The wholesome plants are blasted, and the blood

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Chain'd in the frozen veins. At once they rise,
Borne on the rushing blast. The clouds of heav'n
Are roll'd around, and through the misty air
The shepherd dimly views the dreadful forms
Glancing with lightning speed. At their approach
The mountain trembles on its solid base,
And at their potent voice, its marble sides,
Disparting, to the eye of day unfold
The secrets of its cavern'd womb, where reigns
Primæval Darkness on her ebon throne.
And now the fatal loom their hands prepare:
And now they weave the dreadful web; meanwhile
They chant the solemn death-devoting strain.
"Begin the song. To us the King of heav'n
Commits the fortune of the sanguine field.
Beneath our hands the fatal texture grows,
Which dooms the heroes of the earth to death.
Thrice blest for whom, in his resplendent hall,
The sire of gods the genial feast prepares,
The fair reward of honourable deeds!

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Weave we the web. Whom Odin's wrath pursues,
Rack'd with disease, palsied with icy age,
Or basely falling in the arms of peace;
To that drear mansion, where her gloomy court
Hela, abhorr'd of gods and men, maintains,
Hurl'd by the Destinies, where Pain resides,
And bloated Sloth, and Famine's meagre form,
Anguish, Repentance, Sorrow, Shame, Despair,
Shall howl in torment. To that dismal reign,
To that abhorred goddess we devote
The wretch, whose pride neglects offended heav'n.
Attend, ye Destinies! and hear, oh hell,
Through all thy realms of horror! at our voice
Rouse all thy ghosts, and ratify the doom."
Then all at once upon their winged steeds
The sisters rose in air, and brandish'd fierce
Their blazing falchions. Soon their rapid course
Reach'd the wide plain, with heaps of carnage strew'd,
Where sheath'd in arms the hostile nations stood
Pausing from fight. For with astonish'd eyes

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The king beheld the rage of war subside;
And the two chiefs advancing o'er the plain
In social guise, with looks announcing peace.
When thus aloud the noble Uther spoke:
"Hear, each Loëgrian, each Cornubian band,
Whom impious rage to mutual wounds incites,
And ye, obedient to whose high commands
The nations move to war; Belinus, thou,
And thou, Loëgria's monarch, noble Locrine,
Attend to what th' immortal gods inspire,
Who see with pity wretched mortals fall.
Oh spare the relics of the Trojan name,
Our rising country, and our promis'd glory!
The bravest warrior in thy numerous host
Select, oh king; or if thy generous heart
Demands the conflict, in refulgent arms
Go forth thyself, and dare Cornubia's pow'rs
To find an equal foe." The king, incens'd,
Rolls on the chief his angry eyes, and thus
Furious replies: "Though every chief, like thee,

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Shrink from the danger of the glorious field,
Myself will dare their gather'd strength in arms,
And with unfading laurels grace my brow.
Then let the troops their shining helms unlace,
And give to welcome rest their weary limbs.
Her bravest warrior let Cornubia choose
To meet my single arm: great Leoline,
Ebrancus, or Gorbodion's vaunted strength,
Or all combin'd, I dare their rage alone.
Now let the priest the holy rites prepare,
The altar blaze, the sacred victim fall.
Then swear, Cornubia, if th' immortal pow'rs
Shall grace with conquest my victorious arm,
To leave the land in peace." He said, and now
On Jove's high altar rise the hallow'd flames,
The victim falls, and with uplifted hands
Belinus calls th' immortal pow'rs to witness,
And binds with solemn oath the firm accord.
Then each Cornubian chief, whose glowing breast
Heaves with the brave desire of fair renown,

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Inscribes his name, and in the golden urn
The lot is thrown. In deep attention fix'd,
(While expectation swells the throbbing breast,)
All gazing stand, and silence reigns around,
When now the Herald to th' impatient hosts
Proclaims the name of Leoline. With joy
The warrior hears, and claims the noble strife.
Then rose the king, and press'd in courteous guise
The hero's hand. "Illustrious Leoline,
The gods, to whom our fame is dear, have giv'n,
Indulgent to our pray'r, a noble foe:
Whose conquest, (and forgive me, generous chief,
If with so bright a hope my bosom glows,)
Shall with its fairest wreath my long career
Of glory crown. Perhaps beneath thy sword
Fate dooms my fall. How vast thy praise, when all
My laurels flourish on thy favour'd brow,
And all the triumphs of my arm are thine!
But now the solemn night her ebon car
Drives up the steep of heav'n, and parting day

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Pierces with ruddy beam the western cloud.
Since night forbids the combat, share the feast.
Repose, ye warriors, from your glorious toils,
And draw new vigour from the flowing bowl.
When beams the rosy morn, in glitt'ring arms
We sheath our limbs, and claim the promis'd fight."
Thus spoke the king, with pride and hope elate;
But fate impends and death expects her prey.

From Avon's banks the fierce Sisilius came,
And with Loëgria's youth appear'd in arms,
Him, while the midnight bowl inflam'd to rage,
And frantic deeds, with threats and vile reproach
The king had once dishonour'd: reason soon
Resum'd her sway, and the repentant prince
With gifts of price, and high distinction sooth'd
Th' offended chief, and sought to gain his love.
In vain. He brooded silent o'er his wrong,
And nourish'd in his fierce and gloomy soul
Thirst of revenge, and inextinguish'd hate.
Him, now retiring to his lonely tent,

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With slow and sullen step, the fatal pow'r,
Mista, the minister of Odin's wrath,
Beheld, and thither bent her rapid flight,
In form like Elidure, his friend belov'd,
Friend of his youth, who knew, and knowing shar'd
His sorrows, and with his resentments glow'd.
" And whither does my friend," the goddess said,
" Now bend his steps? Shall dark despair invade
The noble breast? Does vengeance wake no more?"
" Think not," he cried, and from his flashing eyes
Shot lightnings, " that the hope of dear revenge
Burns here no more. Upon this hated earth,
This earth, the kingdom of my foe accurst,
I drag a load of miserable life,
While partial heav'n retards th' expected hour."
" Arraign not heav'n," the dreadful pow'r replies,
" This is the ready colouring of fear,
That shrinks at fancied danger; while the brave
Compels reluctant fortune to befriend him.
Does not that hand with never-erring aim

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Speed the swift arrow's flight? And now the king
Unarm'd, and unsuspicious, vainly deems
No danger near, and for the feast prepares.
Th' expected hour is come; and lo, the gods,
The gods themselves proclaim it!" As she speaks,
Sudden her form expands, her lofty crest
Reaches to heav'n, and to his wond'ring eyes
Blazes a comet with portentous fires.
Across her shoulders hangs her horrid shield,
And in her mighty hand the pond'rous spear
Seems like a pine, which from the birth of time
Has brav'd the tempest on Norweyan hills.
Then, borne upon the wings of mighty winds,
She hovers o'er him with her shield display'd,
And fills his glowing breast with fearless rage.
Now bent on vengeance, from his quiver'd store
He draws the keenest shaft; with eager eye
Now marks its victim: sharply twangs the string;
Trembles the conscious earth; the thunder rolls;
The dreadful sisters clash their sounding arms.

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The king that instant, in the golden bowl
Rais'd high the sparkling wine, and bad his guests
Indulge the feast, and give a loose to joy.
His throat receives the deadly weapon; prone
He falls, and spurns the earth, and dying, grasps
With agonizing hands the bloody dust.
Amazement, fear, confusion, seiz'd on all!
With tumult now the echoing camp resounds,
And fierce reproach, and furious threats arise.
Loëgria's heroes grasp their shining swords,
And fit their helms, and lift their pond'rous shields.
Belinus strives to sooth their rage in vain,
Disclaims the treason, and attests the skies.
When lo! before their wond'ring eyes appears,
Sisilius, glorying in the bloody deed:
"Warriors," he cried, "suspend your frantic strife.
By me the shaft was sped. The festal board,
Th' assembled chiefs beheld the brutal wrong;
Behold the just revenge! How art thou fall'n,
Proud and imperious man! My triumph now

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Is full, and honour from my brighten'd crest
Shines forth with beams unsullied. I have liv'd
Enough to vengeance, and with daring hand
Have seiz'd reluctant fame. Now welcome death."
So saying, with indignant foot he spurn'd
The breathless carcase, and the pointed dart,
With steady hand against his breast impell'd,
Plung'd in his heart. He falls, without a groan
He dies, and on his face a ghastly smile
Remains, that speaks the triumph of his soul.

Now all the camp resounds with loud lament;
And rumour spreads abroad the dreadful tale.
The wretched Guendolen, who sat retir'd
Amidst her virgin train, in silent woe,
And torn with grief alternate, and disdain,
Starts at the sound, and of the cause inquires,
Too soon to learn the utmost rage of fate.
For now her careful eyes afar descry
With slow and solemn march the martial train
Advancing through the gloom; their spears revers'd

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Are trail'd along, their banners sweep the ground,
The moon pale glimmers on their burnish'd arms,
And mournful music loads the passing gale.
And now with boding fears her bosom heaves.
She knew some hero of distinguish'd rank
Had fall'n. More near the sad procession now
Appears, and borne on high a sable bier
Reveals it horrors. There a breathless corse
Extended lies; and soon the well-known arms
Studded with gold, the shield's refulgent orb,
The proudly-crested helm, which oft her hands
Had taught to glitter on his manly brow,
When, in the war against the giant crew,
She arm'd her hero for the sanguine field,
Flash on her sight. She shrieks, and shrieking falls;
The shades of death her swimming eyes surround.
Her weeping damsels with assiduous care
Recall her fleeting spirits. Some apply
The living freshness of the crystal spring;
Some wake the gentle breeze. Returning life

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Shoots o'er her redd'ning cheek. Her languid eyes
She raises, sighing from her inmost breast.
But as again her husband's bleeding corse
Full in her sight appears, again she faints:
Again the virgin train their cares renew.
At length the struggling passion finds a vent,
Complaints break forth, and tears begin to flow.
"Was it for this," she cried, "I rous'd to war
Cornubia's chiefs? for this, in rugged camps
Forgot the softness of my gentle sex,
Nor fled the horrid clash of hostile arms?
To mourn for ever o'er my widow'd bed;
To see the object of my fondest love,
Life of my life, and end of all my wishes,
Stretch'd pale before me, a poor mangled corse,
With wounds disfigur'd, and besmear'd with blood?
Is that the face, on which so oft I gaz'd
With fond delight, and rapture ever new?
Is that the neck, round which my clasping arms
Oft twin'd their am'rous folds, in happier hours?

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(Ah happy hours! for I believ'd he lov'd.")
Then, as officious memory recall'd
Each word, each look, each dear and ravish'd joy,
Each word, each look, each joy remember'd, gives
New stings to grief, new horrors to despair.
And now her mighty wrongs, her slighted charms,
And source of all her woe, the Scythian dame,
Rush on her mind: now fiercer tumults heave
Her lab'ring breast, and rage succeeds to grief.
As in the Lybian forest's horrid shade,
Where the rank soil with deadly poisons teems,
And echo still repeats the dreadful notes
Of the fierce savage prowling for his prey,
The lioness at eve her craggy den
Returning seeks, but seeks in vain her young,
The dusky hunters' prize: her panting sides
With fury heave, and mingled grief and rage
Swell at her heart: her fiery eye-balls glare:
And, every sinew with new vigour brac'd
By mighty anguish, forth she bounds, to quench

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Her kindled rage in blood. Thus Guendolen
To vengeance all her savage soul resigns;
To keenest torture dooms her hated foe;
Dwells on the welcome thought with cruel joy;
Already sees her tears, and hears her groans,
And marks with eager eye the pangs of death.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

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THE

REVENGE

OF

GUENDOLEN.

BOOK V.

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GUENDOLEN acknowledged by both Armies. Estrildis hears of the Death of Locrine. She is made captive with her Daughter Sabra. Both are condemned to death by Guendolen. Apotheosis of Sabra.

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THE

REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

BOOK V.

Now with firm hand Corineus' daughter grasps
The double sceptre, and Loëgria's chiefs,
Join'd with Cornubia, to her sovereign throne
Their ready homage bear, her right confess'd.
And either army, which so lately wag'd
With mutual hatred unrelenting war,
Now with united banners march, now own
One common leader, and one prince obey.
Towards Avon's banks they move: for so the queen
Commands; whose soul, impatient for revenge,
Can know no rest, while yet the guilty dame,

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The rival fair, beholds the light of heav'n.
Sullen and sad, the haughty Guendolen
Conceals her cruel purpose, and resolv'd
Shuts up each avenue to mercy, steels
Her breast to every tender thought; ev'n grief
Finds there no entrance, while revenge and rage
Fill all her soul, and all her pow'rs employ.
The chiefs respect her sorrows, nor inquire
Her secret counsels; but conjecture oft
Estrildis' fate. "Alas!" they cry, "what pray'rs
Shall calm the fury of a woman's breast,
When rous'd by jealous scorn to hate and vengeance?
Yet Guendolen is born of generous race,
By virtue grac'd, by fortune's gifts adorn'd,
And pity soonest dwells in noble minds.
For gentle Sabra too, her tender years,
Her artless innocence may surely plead,
May win some pardon for Estrildis' fault."
Thus commun'd they; for much the hapless dame
Their minds to favour and compassion mov'd:

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For she was fairer than the blushing morn,
And gentler than the gentle western air
Breathing o'er flow'rs, and all her fault was love.
Since Boarex her baffled spells deplor'd;
Since the dread vision of the fatal grove;
Long time to grief abandon'd, and despair,
All bath'd in tears the mournful nymph appear'd,
As some fair lily droops, surcharg'd with rain.
At length bright hope again began to dawn;
For when does hope's soft pow'r the wretch forsake?
When wisdom tries her boasted arts in vain,
When baffled reason fails, and all is dark,
Hope spreads gay visions round the mourner's head,
Grief smiles in tears, and pain forgets to groan.
Then stern adversity her iron scourge
Plies with redoubled force, and all her storms
With fury gathers round the victim's head:
But plies her scourge, and calls her storms in vain;
Amidst the gloom the fair illusions play,
And fancy gives the joy by fate denied.

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Hence, to her wonted sports return'd at length,
Each irksome thought with pleasures still renew'd
She charms to rest; and dance, and jocund song,
The lute's soft music, and the sounding lyre,
Float on the breeze, and gladden ev'ry shade.
Now too the tongue of fame proclaim'd aloud
How all Loegria in her monarch's cause
Pour'd forth her armed youth prepar'd for war:
How Sture's fair banks with glitt'ring armour shone,
And far and wide the crowded camp extends:
And how the king, with swift and secret march,
Had pass'd the foe, and join'd his loyal bands.
This heard, her woman's mind, still prone to change,
Pass'd quick to rash presumption from despair;
And deem'd the foe subdu'd, and her lov'd lord
Ev'n then returning, with the laurel crown'd.

'Twas night, and sleep, descending o'er her couch,
Shed on her languid limbs his balmy dew:
When, lo! a fearful vision rose. A bier,
Borne slow, with solemn march before her pass'd,

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O'er which a veil of deepest black was drawn,
And from each searching eye conceal'd the dead.
Estrildis from th' attendant train inquires;
But all, with downcast look, and gesture sad,
Move on in silence; but at length appear'd
A female form, superior in her grief,
Majestic, and alone. Fast flow'd her tears,
Incessant, streaming on her heaving breast,
O'er which her arms were folded. The sad sight
Estrildis with unwonted passion view'd.
When now, before the couch arriv'd, she stopp'd,
And turning rais'd her mournful head: the tears
Now faster flow'd, and from her breast she drew
Deep sighs, and clasp'd her agonizing hands.
Estrildis then her mother knew. She shriek'd,
And grasp'd with fond embrace the fleeting shade.
The strong emotion burst the bonds of sleep,
And all the vision vanish'd; but impress'd
Deep on her mind the sad remembrance dwelt,
And fill'd her secret soul with boding fears.

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Now beam'd the rosy morn. Beside their queen
Her virgin handmaids stood. "Awake," they cried,
"Awake, fair goddess of these silvan scenes.
For thee the sun his genial pow'r displays,
And the glad earth bestrews thy path with flow'rs.
Where'er thou tread'st the rose spontaneous blows,
And lilies spring, and balmy odours rise.
The breeze, that lightly sweeping o'er the lawn
Scarce moves the daisy on its slender stalk,
To greet thy beauties still more lightly breathes,
And whispers softly, 'tis the time for joy."
Rous'd at their gentle call, the beauteous dame
Comes smiling forth: yet still amidst her smiles,
The downcast eye, and often starting tear,
Some inward grief, some hidden care betrays.
Now all, as chance or wanton mirth inclines,
In various sports the pleasing hours employ.
These ply their nimble feet in measur'd dance:
To softest notes, that tender wishes breathe,
The glowing damsels move with easy grace;

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And in the liquid radiance of their eyes
Desire now sparkles, and now rapture melts.
Soon to quick strains, that speak triumphant joy,
Their nimble footsteps scarcely print the flow'rs;
Nor can the eye their rapid course discern
Through all the mazes of the varied dance,
While this flies swiftly, and while that pursues,
And shouting mirth from every glade resounds.
Some, like Diana's virgin nymphs attir'd,
The silver bow, the painted quiver bear.
These with fleet greyhounds o'er the level lawn
The flying hare, the dappled fawn pursue.
While gentler some, in od'rous shades reclin'd,
Tune softest voices to celestial airs;
Airs such as once in myrtle groves were sung,
What time the smiling queen of gay desires
Forsook her Paphian reign, her rosy bow'r,
To hear the ditties of the Lesbian dame.
To this fair troop, in mute attention rapt,
Estrildis listen'd, for their theme was love.

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They sung how first the sweetly-painful fires
Steal unsuspected to the virgin's heart:
Then her soft breast what strange emotions heave!
What burning blushes tinge her glowing cheek!
She sighs, but yet she knows not why she sighs;
She blushes, yet unconscious of the flame.
Ah, simple maid! too well those eyes declare
Whence spring thy blushes, whence thy sighs arise;
Those eyes which sparkle when the youth appears,
Those eyes suffus'd with tears when he retires.
What anguish now her gentle bosom rends!
What doubts, what fears, her lab'ring mind perplex!
But see! the loves in flow'ry fetters lead
The youth enamour'd to the secret bow'r.
Now the coy maid with feign'd resentment burns,
Reproves his rashness, and rejects his suit;
But soon the stolen glance, the frequent sigh,
The glowing cheek, the fault'ring voice, betray
The soft deceit, the mutual flame reveal.
The queen delighted hears, the grateful song

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Wakes sweet remembrance. Fancy gaily paints
Scenes of past joys, and every joy renews.
In plaintive notes the nymphs resume the strain,
In plaintive notes; but still the theme was love.
They sung the poor, forsaken maid, who weeps
Her charms despis'd, her easy faith betray'd.
Nor swells her bosom with a lighter grief,
Who mourns the absence of the youth she loves,
Torn from her arms to brave the stormy main,
Or nobly toiling in the field of fame;
But never, never to return again.
Estrildis now her soul to grief resigns,
While in her mind distracting fears arise;
Fast flow her tears, quick pants her throbbing breast.
Th' attentive virgins change their artful song,
And now no more the nymph in absence mourns;
The youth returns, his toils and perils o'er,
The youth returns, with wreaths of conquest crown'd.
Oh joy unhop'd! oh bliss beyond compare!

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Oh, pangs of absence, amply now repaid!
Nor yet had ceas'd the strain; but now the queen
Saw one that press'd the plain with hasty step;
His head the helmet bore, his hand the spear.
Sudden with beating heart she ran, she flew;
"And comes my lord?" with eager voice she cried.
But when she saw his bent and mournful brow,
His downcast eye, and mark'd his fault'ring voice,
Ere yet his tardy words an utterance found,
She guess'd the worst. At once through every nerve
Shoots quick the thrilling anguish. With fix'd eye
Gazing on empty air, hands firmly clasp'd,
And pale and ghastly cheek, she stands. In vain
Her sad attendants with assiduous care
Would sooth her grief. As if depriv'd of sense,
Their words she hears not, nor regards their tears.
So Niobe appear'd, when her last hope,
Pierc'd by relentless Dian's vengeful shaft,
Fell from her clasping arms, a breathless corse.

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Now on her widow'd couch Estrildis lies,
Still in mute sorrow rapt, with eyes still fix'd,
And looks that witness'd deep despair. Till day
Declines, and through the solemn hours of night,
Which sooth with welcome rest each lighter woe,
Now by loud wailing, by entreaty now,
Constant and warmly urg'd, the damsel train
Would wake attention: now the winning charm
Of music breathes unheard: her darling Sabra
With sweet caresses wooes her wonted smile,
And now implores regard with piteous tears;
Those sweet caresses she bestows in vain,
And long those tears unnotic'd fall. At length
Sudden upon her child she cast her view.
Then gush'd the torrent. Springing from the couch,
Round the dear pledge of her disastrous loves
She clasp'd her agonizing arms; she wept,
She sobb'd aloud; and much with fault'ring tongue,
In broken murmurs, while the bursting tears

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Stream on her breast, complains: "My child, my child!
Why did I bear thee? Thou wilt curse the hour
That gave thee to behold the light of day;
And her that bore thee. Oh that pitying fate
Had cut my thread of life in early youth!—
And must I bear the bitter scorn, the taunts
Of haughty Guendolen? Alas, alas!
There was a time when all her rage was vain;
But now the noble Locrine is no more.
What then remains but death? Oh fatal charms!
Oh beauty, once so priz'd, but now abhorr'd!
Then, then I should have died, when first he sought
To move my virgin heart with guilty love;
When first my conscious bosom felt the flame.
He had liv'd happy yet. Oh Guendolen!
Sure never pity touch'd that savage breast,
Nor gentle love held soft dominion there,
Had I forsaken mourn'd my slighted charms,
In tears my lonely hours had pass'd away;

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I would have piero'd the air with heavy sighs,
And sorrow'd till my aching heart was broke,
And death had wrapp'd me in eternal rest;
But never, never thought of curst revenge,
And stain'd my hands with blood, to me more dear
Than is the vital stream which warms my heart.
Alas! for him alone I wish'd to live:
In him was all my joy; to make him blest
My only hope; and, but to see him blest,
Though in another's arms, had broke the gloom
Of black despair with some faint beams of bliss.
But thou hast not the soul of woman; thou
Art merciless; his blood is on thy steel.
Mine too must stream; and oh, might mine suffice,
My ready hand should give the torrent way.
But thou, my child, poor wretched orphan! oh,
What is reserv'd for thee? A mother's love
Clings to thee still, and binds me yet to life."
Thus as she mourns, the tears incessant stream,

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Sighs follow sighs, and groan succeeds to groan.
From her dim eyes soft lustre beams no more;
Her cheek is faded, and her lips are pale.
So beneath southern skies, some tender plant
Lifts its fair head, and courts the solar ray:
Transplanted now, while summer's genial pow'r
With transient beauty paints some northern clime,
It blooms in all its native charms array'd:
But when stern winter comes, and in his train
Bleak storms, and hail, and snows, and killing frost,
Discolour'd all its drooping leaves are seen,
And, scarcely blown, its blossoms strew the ground.

Now in the sweet abode of love and joy
Glitters the deadly lance, the helmet flames;
And where the lute's soft notes, and softer voice
Of amorous maiden, breath'd enchanting airs,
The trumpet's clangor rings. A warlike train,
Charg'd with their sovereign's stern commands, appear!
Plung'd in despair, with mighty grief oppress'd,

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Impatient of the load of wretched life,
Their fierce demeanour, and denouncing death,
Each dark and frowning brow Estrildis saw,
And saw unmov'd. What ills had fate in store,
What could inventive cruelty inflict,
Which to her anxious mind the busy hand
Of fancy, in the sad and lonely hour,
In all its horrors had not yet pourtray'd?
Not so the damsel train. With piercing shrieks
They rend the air, and now with frantic gesture
Crowd round their much-lov'd mistress. On her robe
One clings in speechless woe: one bathes her hand
With tears; one fondly twines her clasping arms
About her slender waist; another seeks
To print upon her lips a parting kiss;
This, rolling in the dust, her graceful locks
Tears from the roots, and beats her wretched breast;
That with loud cries arraigns relentless heav'n.
She with mild action soothes their stormy grief,
And thanks their faithful love. Advancing now,

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A rude unmanner'd ruffian from her brow,
The mark of royalty, (so will'd the queen)
The sacred fillet tore with churlish hand.
Another with opprobrious taunts revil'd.
Behind her back the harsh and galling chain
Confin'd her snowy wrists. With threat'ning voice
Now the rough soldier urg'd her trembling steps.
Her beauteous eyes, suffus'd with tears, she rais'd
With such a sweet and moving eloquence,
That all at once his savage soul was mov'd,
And his stern nature, long to sights of woe
Inur'd, and practis'd in the trade of blood,
Now first to pity yielded. Through the band
Spread swift the soft contagion. Now they saw
With alter'd mind each soul-enchanting grace
Borrowing a nameless, and resistless charm
From her sad fate. Such was the general woe,
So were their rugged bosoms mov'd, it seem'd
As if the daughter, or the wife of each
Was led to instant death. And now they came

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Where held the rival queen her throned state.
Soon as impatient Guendolen beheld
The object of her hate thus fall'n, and captive,
A gloomy joy her features overspread.
" Is this," she cried, " is this the boasted form
At whose superior lustre my weak charms
Must fade away, no more to wake desire?
Is this the haughty dame, whose stern decree
Has sentenc'd Guendolen to shameful exile?
Say, does thy mercy yet revoke the doom,
Or can no pray'rs thy stubborn heart subdue?"
Th' ungenerous insult the fair mourner heard
With silent anguish. Prostrate on the earth,
Before the feet of her relentless foe,
Awhile she wept. " By those who gave thee birth,
By the dear name of mother," she exclaims,
" For oh, canst thou, who bear'st a mother's name,
Behold my sorrows with unpitying eyes?
Not for myself I plead. (Too well I know
What fatal doom awaits me.) But my child

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She never has offended. Look on her,
Oh bend thine eyes upon her, see, she kneels,
She weeps, poor victim of her mother's guilt.
Oh let not virgin innocence in vain
On tender mercy call. Oh spare her, spare her,
And ages yet unborn shall bless thy name.
Ev'n in the gloomy regions of the dead,
Thy Locrine's spirit shall rejoicing hear,
And thank the goodness which preserves his child.
Ah, wherefore dost thou frown? Yes, let me perish,
I own my guilt, prepare new torments for me.
Patient I suffer, and in death my voice
Shall speak thy praise, so thou but bid me hope
My child, my darling Sabra may survive."
"Urge me no more," the haughty dame replies,
"My soul is fix'd immoveable as fate."
Detested wretch! driv'n from my husband's bed,
Hurl'd from a throne, the daughter of Corineus
By thee has wander'd forth a woeful exile.
How many heroes by thy crimes have fall'n!

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What widows mourn, what orphans thou hast made!
By thee my Locrine died. And would'st thou now
Plead the curst fruit of thy pernicious joys
To win reluctant mercy? No, the ghosts
Of myriads in thy fatal quarrel slain,
My husband's spirit, call for signal vengeance.
Thou diest, and she, the minion of thy love,
Is she not thine, and shall she hope for mercy?"
Thus while she speaks, Estrildis' soul is torn
With racking anguish. Now she knows all hope
Extinguish'd, and the near approach of death,
Inevitable death, beholds: now all
The mother swells her breast: with eager eyes
She gazes on her child; the galling chain
Forbids a last embrace. The tender maid
Lifts her imploring hands in pray'r to heav'n.
Now by each fond endearing name she calls
Her agonizing parent; now entreats
Remorseless Guendolen, and weeps aloud.
But, lo, the ministers of death approach.

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Her fears redouble; throbs her heaving breast;
She flies with trembling feet. Alas! in vain.
Pale, gasping, down she sinks. Like some poor hare,
Whose failing speed the clamorous pack o'ertake.
One eager hound hangs o'er her furry back;
His tusky jaws already drink her blood.
Quick glancing with a bound she turns away,
But still where'er she turns she finds a foe.
Rudely they hale the fainting maid along,
Nor could her youth, nor could her lovely form
Move kind compassion. Oh, what bitter pangs,
Estrildis, tore thy miserable breast
At this distracting sight! Oh Guendolen,
Has not thy savage fury spent its rage?
See how with frantic air the wretched mother
Struggles to burst her bonds, and struggling still,
Pursues her with her eyes! "Barbarians, where,
Where do you drag my child? Oh quickly kill me,
Let me not see her death!" Her cries are vain.
They drag her to the cliff. The river rolls

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His rapid wave beneath. Estrildis strains,
Distracted, every nerve. Maternal love
And fear supply unwonted force. She bursts
From the surrounding guard; she runs, she flies:
In vain the guard her rapid course pursue.
She gains the cliff, and round her darling child
Had thrown with eager haste her clasping arms,
But still her arms were bound. From the steep brow
She sees the victim hurl'd. When, lo! the stream
Suspends his course; the swelling waves subside;
The winds are hush'd; each breast a sacred awe
Pervades, prophetic of some strange event.
And now the yielding surface of the lake
Divides, and all the train of sister nymphs,
Nereids and Naiads, from their coral beds
And sparry grots, their shining tresses rear;
In their soft arms the falling maid receive,
And swiftly bear from sight. The wreathed shell
Of Triton sounds meanwhile, and tells th' approach

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Of the sea gods: Ocean, the hoary sire;
Majestic Tethys; and the dreaded power
Who wields th' earth-shaking trident; Nereus old;
Doris, and Amphitrite; and, beloved
Of thundering Jove, the silver-footed dame;
And every god, and every nymph, that rules
The fountains, and the rivers of the isle;
Nor absent was the queen of soft desires,
Sprung from the wave, delight of earth and heaven,
Fair Aphrodite. Scattering balmy sweets,
The loves around her, and the graces move,
And the light zephyr plies his filmy wings.
Won by her soft request, her kindred gods
The gentle Sabra, from her race deriv'd,
Accept, henceforth the goddess of the stream,
With holy rites ador'd, and warbled song.
The pale assistants fear and wonder seiz'd,
While joy unhop'd on lost Estrildis beam'd,
And fill'd her soul with courage not her own.

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"Now, Guendolen," she cried, "I scorn thy power,
And all thy rage is vain. Oh welcome, death!
No longer arm'd with terrors, thus I court thee."
So saying, from the steep and lofty cliff
Headlong she plung'd into the rolling flood.

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THE

BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO I.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO I.

'Twas when the zephyr's breath had wak'd the flowers,
And May with blossoms deck'd her vernal bowers,
Two knights with various talk beguil'd the way,
Which near the stream and through the forest lay.
Sons of one sire, nor more by blood allied,
Than by the bands of friendship closely tied,
In social arms the noble pair proceeds
To purchase glory by adventurous deeds;
Yet different passions each brave bosom fir'd,
By honour one, as one by love inspir'd.

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An aged monarch held his gentle reign,
Where Deva washes the Cornavian plain.
An only daughter was his pride and care,
Mild as the dawn, and fairest of the fair.
This prince, by conquest once with glory crown'd,
Nor less in arts of useful peace renown'd,
Proclaim'd a tournament, still pleas'd to view
The martial game his triumphs past renew.
Thither the warriors urg'd their steeds along,
Cadwall, and Paladour, the bold and young.
His strength superior, and his dauntless heart,
To Cadwall omens of success impart.
As brave was Paladour, and skill'd to wield
Each various weapon in the listed field:
But anxious fears his labouring mind infest,
And secret passion swells his heaving breast.
"Round other brows let wreaths of conquest twine,"
Thus pray'd the youth, "the lovely maid be mine."
Cadwall amaz'd his pensive mien survey'd,
As slow they journey'd through surrounding shade.

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'Why droops,' he cried, 'my brother and my friend,'
'Though full in view immortal fame ascend?'
'The brave of ev'ry clime the prize contest;
'But no base fears invade that noble breast;
'For nurs'd in arms, and bred to hardy fight,
'Thy sport is war, and danger thy delight.
'Yet dost thou droop! Thy secret wound explain,
'Or do I boast the name of friend in vain?'
'And will not Cadwall,' Paladour replied,
'The fond distresses of my heart deride?
'Cadwall, unknowing of love's soft alarms,
'And kindling only at the sound of arms?
'Yet not on choice, but unresisted fate,
'Depends the various colour of our state;
'Thou by th' Almighty will to fame impell'd,
'Thy friend in love's inglorious bondage held.
'Know then that, once, beneath the beechen shade,
'Tir'd with the chace my fainting limbs I laid.
'Sudden the rustling boughs invade my ear,
'Quick panting breath, and rapid steps I hear.

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'Forth from the thicket burst a hind in flight,
'White as the snow on proud Plinlimmon's height;
'And through the glade her trembling speed renews,
'While close behind a ravenous wolf pursues.
'Compassion touch'd me, and my pointed dart
'Had reach'd, with certain aim, the monster's heart;
'But sudden thunder shook the woods around,
'Blue lightnings gleam'd, and earthquake rock'd the ground,
'Dire yells were heard, and shrieks of wild affright,
'And all the vision vanish'd from my sight.
'Wondering I stood, with sacred horror fill'd,
'In ev'ry vein the vital current chill'd;
'When, lo, a female form divinely bright,
'Like the mild radiance of the queen of night,
'Rose on the shade. A lucid robe she wore,
'A golden wand her rosy fingers bore;
'But when the smiling nymph her silence broke,
'Celestial music warbled as she spoke.'

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"Receive," she cried, "Oh youth for ever dear,
"My thanks, my love, and to my words give ear.
"By thee preserv'd, I draw the vital air,
"My wonted shape, my wonted power I bear.
"Bound by strong spells, a milk-white hind I seem'd,
"Till by thy prowess from the wolf redeem'd.
"A false magician Archimago nam'd,
"My favour sought, by mighty love inflam'd;
"But sought in vain, I loath'd his impious kind,
"Still prone to mischief, still to blood inclin'd.
"Hence in his breast relentless hate he bore,
"But veil'd his purpose, for he fear'd my pow'r.
"For know that not of mortal seed I came,
"Of fairy race, Melissa is my name.
"One day surpriz'd, defenceless, o'er my head,
"While yet I slept, the mutter'd charm he read.
"Starting I fled. Where'er my steps he view'd
"A fiend, in likeness of a wolf, pursu'd.
"Oh, could my art a length of years bestow,
"Exempt from pain, and ev'ry human woe,

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" The boon were thine! But thou submiss attend.
" The bliss of man must on himself depend.
" Such is the will of fate. One choice is giv'n
" Of good, or ill, by all disposing Heav'n.
" Fair be thy lot! But if thy judgment fail,
" Know patient courage may at length prevail,
" To milder doom the favouring powers dispose,
" And fix the period of thy toils and woes.
" But for th' ignoble herd, the dastard crew,
" Afraid to choose, or choosing to pursue;
" By men despis'd, nor more of gods the care,
" Their lot is pain and anguish, and despair."
' The fairy spoke, and shook her flowing hair.
' That heavenly fragrance fill'd the circling air.
' Light breezes now through trembling oziers play;
' And lengthen'd shadows tell the closing day;
' A pleasing languor crept through all my frame,
' And sleep resistless o'er my senses came:
' But when awake at length I raise my eyes,
' What charming scenes, what new elysiums rise!

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'Here the thick forest spreads profoundest night;
'Here opening glades admit the chequer'd light;
'Pours the swift torrent from the sounding hill;
'Or winds along the dale the murmuring rill;
'Through parting boughs now bursts the blazing day,
'Distinct and clear appears the streaming ray,
'The distant trees reflect the vivid beam,
'And all the glowing forest seems to flame:
'At length the glory of the plain is seen,
'A thousand beauties deck the varied scene;
'Slow through enamell'd meadows glides the stream,
'And distant lakes with silvery lustre gleam:
'Alone, majestic, here the oak ascends,
'Himself a wood; and wide his shade extends:
'Of softer beauty, and inferior size,
'Here mix'd with fir, the graceful birch arise,
'Whose drooping boughs, when zephyr wakes the dawn,
'Sweep the light drops that glitter on the lawn.
'Th' expanse beyond presents its varying dyes,
'Farms, temples, cities, turret-crown'd, arise.

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'Blue hills that hide in clouds the lofty head,
'Rocks, fields, and woods, in bright confusion spread.
'Here while I gaz'd, Melissa stood beside,
'And press'd my hand, while smiling thus she cry'd:'
"If shady groves, and flow'ry plains delight,
"Well may these groves and plains attract the sight:
"But soon the scene shall other joys dispense,
"And charms superior greet thy ravish'd sense."
'Then through a winding path, with boughs o'erspread,
'Yet unexplor'd, my willing steps she led,
'To where the turf with brighter verdure glows,
'Proud to display the beauty of the rose,
'Which summer's warm embraces blushing meets,
'And yields reluctant her unrivall'd sweets.
'There blooms the violet beneath the shade,
'By the light zephyr's balmy theft betray'd;
'The bright carnation, and the lily pale,
'With aromatic fragrance scent the gale:
'There ev'ry shrub to buxom Flora dear,
'There all the treasures of the ripening year.

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'A grotto too appears of living stone,
'Here bright with spars, and there with moss o'ergrown,
'From pendent rocks while trickling waters flow,
'That wind, and spread among the flowers below.
'Delightful seat! where rural nymphs might dwell,
'That tend the grove, and feed the crystal well;
'Or Venus from the noontide heat retire,
'To cherish amorous thoughts, and soft desire.
'Soon as confest the fairy rose to view,
'A troop of lovely females round her drew.'
"Receive," she cried, "Melissa's honour'd guest,
"Of all the race of man belov'd the best.
"Preserv'd by him, I view my favourite bow'r,
"And hail the daughters of my love once more.
"Each soothing art, each winning charm employ,
"He gave me freedom, move his heart to joy."
'With graceful gesture, and with courtly phrase,
'Each gentle damsel her command obeys,
'They bid me welcome to that soft retreat,
'Where the mild virtues with the graces meet.

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'Now the gay dance my willing steps invites,
'And now the song's resistless charm delights.
'Fair was each nymph, but o'er the rest was found
'One lovely maid, with matchless beauty crown'd.
'Not half so bright were Helen's virgin charms,
'When Theseus prest her trembling in his arm:
'Nor thus she met the Phrygian youth's embrace,
'When favouring Venus heighten'd every grace.
'Ah who unmov'd that heavenly face had seen,
'That sweet simplicity, that modest mien?
'I lov'd, and soon avow'd my amorous pain,
'The blushing maiden heard not with disdain;
'Perhaps had favour'd, but Melissa's power
'Forbad. Now sudden fades the charming bower,
'In listless languor every sense is bound,
'And clos'd my eyes in magic sleep profound.
'But when I wake, again the beechen shade,
'The tangled forest, and the lonely glade,
'Rush on my view. With pensive steps, and slow,
'Back to the city's crowded walls I go;

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'There seem the pleasures of the throng to share,
'While my full bosom heaves with anxious care;
'Doubtful, if true, the visions of the night,
'Or sleep deceiv'd me with illusions bright.
'And still the curse denounc'd assails my ear,
'Shakes my resolve, and chills my soul with fear.'
'Shall dreams,' incens'd the noble Cadwall cried,
'Thus quell thy spirit? Oh, forbid it, pride?
'The generous pride that manly bosoms fires,
'And lofty thoughts, and daring deeds inspires.
'Soon shall the martial plain, the lists prepar'd,
'The sounding trumpet, the recording bard,
'Renew the thirst of never-dying fame,
'And love be vanquish'd by a nobler flame.'
He said, meanwhile, regardless of their way,
Deep in the mazes of the wood they stray.
Descending now from his meridian throne,
The glorious sun with milder lustre shone:
The western sky was ting'd with vivid gold,
And ruddy beams the close of day foretold.

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When sudden, where the beaten paths divide,
Cadwall restrain'd his eager steed, and cried,
'Ere yet descend the viewless shades of night,
'Do thou the left explore, and I the right;
'And if again our destin'd course appear,
'Let thy loud horn assail my list'ning ear.'
He said, the gentle Paladour obey'd,
And turning journey'd through the shadowy glade.
Now easy was the way, and plain to sight,
Now meeting branches spread untimely night.
Dark, and more dark, the growing woods appear;
Scar'd by the clash of arms, the bounding deer
Starts from his lair, and wolves are howling near.
Pondering he stood, uncertain to pursue
His search, or backward trace his steps anew.
When, lo, Melissa stood reveal'd to sight,
Clear shone the distant trees with sudden light.
'To me are known,' the gracious fairy cried,
'What doubts, what fears thy anxious breast divide.

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'Now to my words give ear. The blissful grove,
'The seat of peace, and innocence and love,
'Where thy rapt soul was held in soft delight,
'Was no delusive vision of the night.
'For thee the forest spreads his ample shade,
'And contemplation woos thee to the glade,
'Where nature's volume to thy view is giv'n,
'And sacred science lifts the soul to heav'n;
'While art shall bid, before thy wond'ring eyes,
'Her graceful forms in sweet enchantment rise,
'Beauty to thee her willing ear incline,
'And all the raptures love bestows be thine.
'But long oblivion waits thy fading name;
'These rosy bowers are not the path to fame.'
She spoke, and rais'd aloft her magic wand,
Delightful scenes arise at her command,
Through myrtle groves the zephyr plies his wings,
And dulcet sounds, and balmy fragrance brings;
Nor distant far, amid the flow'ry glade,
Th' enamour'd youth beholds his fav'rite maid.

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Ah, Paladour! in vain thy dauntless breast
Those glitt'ring arms with martial pomp invest;
Ah, taught in vain, upon the listed field,
To rein the steed, the fatal lance to wield;
No more loud trumpets summon thee to fight,
Love's gentle whispers woo thee to delight;
Sweet smiling lips, and sparkling eyes detain,
And beauty binds thee in her silken chain.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

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THE

BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO II.

Digitized by Google

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THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO II.

To noble Cadwall now returns the song,
Who in the tangled forest wander'd long,
And oft he blows his sounding horn amain;
But only echo answers to the strain.
Now fear, now doubt his lab'ring mind torments,
And now he blames his friend, and now laments.
'Ah, Paladour! perhaps, by numbers slain;
'Thy failing voice on Cadwall call'd in vain.'
Resolv'd at length, he speeds with anxious breast
To where the brave the prize of fame contest,

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There yet he hopes to hear his brother's name,
Assist his prowess, and partake his fame.

The lists were set, and round in order plac'd,
Renowned knights, and dames with beauty grac'd.
Above the rest, the monarchs hoary hair
Appears, and by his side the princely fair.
Her ivory hands the victor's meed unfold,
A scarf that glows with purple and with gold.
A knight before her stands, with ardent eyes,
Of fierce demeanour, and gigantic size:
In gorgeous arms his mighty limbs are drest;
A golden eagle forms his lofty crest.
As proudly confident he claims the prize,
Applauding thousands rend with shouts the skies.
'Let the bold knight, who dares my claim deny,
'Here, in bright arms the arduous conflict try.
'An hundred knights the bold defiance hear,
'Nor one encounters this victorious spear.'
He said. Upon his arm the royal maid,
That envy'd scarf with graceful action laid;

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When the shrill trumpet sudden sounds alarms,
The throng divides, the herald calls to arms;
Swift o'er the plain the thund'ring courser flies,
And Cadwall stands before their wond'ring eyes.
Across his dazzling armour's silver light,
A baldric flam'd with glowing crimson bright;
From the proud helmet, and the polish'd shield,
Portentous splendour blazes on the field,
And as he moves, and shakes his plumy crest,
Unusual horror seizes every breast.
As when the Greek the Dardan prince pursu'd,
And his fell lance in heav'nly blood embru'd,
Swift as he rush'd upon the prostrate foe,
His conq'ring lance just lifted for the blow,
Apollo's Ægis blaz'd before his eyes
Surpriz'd, but undismay'd, he quits the prize.
Th' astonish'd knight thus from the scarf retires,
And the rash youth who dares his force admires,
Then to the rest his beamy lance applies,
And full of fury from the barrier flies.

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Nor less impatient to the dreadful course
The noble Cadwall urg'd his foaming horse:
Meanwhile the trumpet's warlike clangor's rise,
And gazing crowds assail with vows the skies.
Some to the knight with fav'ring minds incline,
Mov'd by his prowess past, and force divine:
But more to noble Cadwall wish success,
And chief the fair with happy omens bless;
Those mov'd by novelty his cause embrace,
These by his manly form, and youthful grace.
They meet. As when th' impetuous hurricane
Lifts the black billows of th' Atlantic main,
Two ships, the sport of the destroying blast,
While the loud surges lash the lab'ring mast,
Encounter. Such the shock. Erect, unmov'd,
His strength, and courage, each brave warrior prov'd;
In fragments round the shiver'd lances fly;
Upon the plain the flound'ring coursers lie.
Now the brave youths their shining falchions wield,
And bear before their manly breasts the shield.

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The batter'd mail resounds, the combat grows,
From ev'ry limb the painful moisture flows,
Thick from their arms the fiery sparkles fly,
Like the sad meteors of th' autumnal sky,
Denouncing death; now foot to foot they fight,
With eye attentive, and collected might;
Now on the sword the rapid sword receive;
Now with the lifted shield the stroke deceive.
Ill brooks the knight, for hardy deeds renown'd,
And still in ev'ry field with conquest crown'd,
The lengthen'd conflict, and as fury fires
Springs on the foe: the wary foe retires,
And while from high the flaming steel descends,
Quick glancing, shuns the ruin which impends.
The knight bends forward with the frustrate blow;
The guiltless weapon marks the sand below.
Fierce Cadwall rushes on with dreadful cries,
And with repeated strokes his rival plies;
Till low in dust the golden eagle lies.

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The heralds now the joyful victor lead,
Where his brave hands receive the prize decreed.
His beaver rais'd, the wond'ring crowd admire
His form, his youthful bloom, his eye of fire.
The royal maid the prize decreed bestows,
While her fair cheek with warmer blushes glows,
As in that season soft when April showers
Have loos'd the pregnant glebe, and wak'd the flowers,
Sweet summer by his warm caresses won,
First meets the genial radiance of the sun;
Now spreads her glowing charms, now sudden shrouds
Her timid beauties in a veil of clouds:
The gentle virgin feels the pleasing fire,
And checks, but checks in vain, the fond desire.
In Cadwall's breast while new emotions rise,
Amidst triumphal shouts, the vanquish'd victor sighs.
But Archimago, since the fatal hour
Which rescu'd fair Melissa from his pow'r,
With anguish burn'd. And now he lifts on high
His wand of force to rend with storms the sky.

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He chants the dreadful verse, whose thrilling sound
Appals the spirits of th' abyss profound.
As when, beneath some close concealment pent,
The strengthen'd fires now struggle for a vent,
First the light fumes in fleecy volumes rise,
Then spreading blacken, and involve the skies;
Dark clouds are roll'd on clouds, and night on night;
Pale horror glares, and wildly shrieks affright;
Then burst the flames. Obedient to the spell,
Thus swarm the dreadful progeny of hell.
In long succession, with terrific cries,
Fiends, after fiends, detested forms, arise:
In crowded ranks around the seer they stand;
Fearless he sees, and waves his awful wand.
Trembling the spectres stand. In thought profound
His careful eyes he fixes on the ground;
Then, for the mighty mischief he intends,
A chosen spirit at his call attends.
As when a tiger at the close of day
Discerns, 'mid rustling boughs, th' approaching prey;

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He waves his sinewy tail with eager joy,
Impatient fury flashing from his eye.
So joys the fiend, and claps his dusky plumes;
Then at his master's high behest assumes
The form of Cadwall. O'er his shoulders thrown,
Such and so bright the crimson baldric shone;
Such radiant arms his manly limbs invest;
And such the honours of his lofty crest.
Graceful his courser's fiery speed he reins;
His better hand the pond'rous spear sustains.
Now by the side of Paladour he stands,
Where a tall oak the subject plain commands.
The youth at ease diffus'd upon the ground,
And list'ning to the flute's enchanting sound,
Borne by light breezes from the neighb'ring grove,
Resign'd his raptur'd soul to thoughts of love.
And while he glows with recollected joy,
Soft hopes of future bliss his mind employ.
Sudden the courser's thund'ring pace alarms,
And glitter through the shade the polish'd arms:

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He sees the plumy helm, the deadly spear,
And these reproachful words assail his ear :
'Thus shall thy youth's auspicious promise end?
'And is it thus that Cadwall finds his friend?
'Lost to thyself, to virtue, and to fame,
'The stain of knighthood, of thy race the shame.
'Well dost thou seek the lone and silent shade;
'Thy friend deserted, and thy faith betray'd.'
Abash'd, oppress'd with sorrow and surprize,
'Spare thy reproof,' with fault'ring voice he cries.
'Ah spare thy just reproof! Ah yet forgive,
'Nor let thy kindled wrath for ever live!
'Behold, I follow thee. Delightful bow'rs,
'Where pleasure led the train of laughing hours,
'Farewell! Ah, yet th' involuntary sigh,
'Ah yet the tear that trembles in my eye!
'Dear that you are to this sad breast proclaim,
'Dearer than life, than all but virtuous fame.'
Thus while he speaks, upon his heaving breast
The mournful youth the twisted hauberk prest :

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His brow once more a martial frown assumes,
Dark with the beaming helmet's wavy plumes:
His hand the spear and moony shield sustain,
And his proud courser feels the curbing rein.
And now with tearful, oft reverted eye,
He marks from view the lessening landscape fly;
While fancy paints to his disorder'd mind
The lovely mourner, whom he leaves behind.
From those fair eyes what streams of sorrow flow!
And ah, how melting is her voice of woe!
Now in his yielding breast love's gentle fires
Revive, and each fond hope of fame expires;
But still with keen reproach, or artful praise,
The phantom urges, still the youth obeys.
O'er many a mountain, many a plain they past,
Till evening's dusky veil the skies o'ercast.
Bleak heaths before them then in prospect lay;
No tree was nigh, no taper's cheerful ray
From sheltering cottage gleam'd, but shrill around
Sings the keen blast, the gath'ring tempests sound.

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Then to the friendly form, with heaving breast,
The mournful Paladour his words addrest:
'Alas, my brother!'—Sudden from his sight
The faithless phantom vanish'd into night.
Aghast he stood. Now darkness wraps the skies,
Black clouds are roll'd on clouds, and winds arise;
The thunder roars; the livid lightning glares;
The cruel Archimage confest appears.
Secure of vengeance, with malignant smile,
The wizard eyes the victim of his guile,
And thus insults:—'Now brave again my power!
'Now call Melissa from her fragrant bower!
'Then hadst thou fear'd, when thy presumptuous arm
'Freed the proud fairy, and made vain my charm;
'What ills hadst thou escap'd! an endless train
'Of torment, sorrow, still increasing pain!
'Now vengeance seize him!' At the powerful sound
A troop of ghastly fiends the youth surround.
Full in his view their angry snakes they rear,
And pierce with threat'ning yell his tortur'd ear.

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From their fell looks he turns his loathing eyes:
Where'er he turns more dreadful forms arise.
Then all at once in air they lift him high,
Spread their dark pinions, and prepare to fly.
A sudden whirlwind, with resistless sweep,
Lays waste the realms, and lifts the foaming deep;
Uproots the woods, o'erthrows th' embattled tow'rs,
And strews with navies wreck'd th' affrighted shores.
O'er half the globe they speed their rapid flight
To where, beneath the pole, mysterious Night
Reigns with eternal Frost, and man's pale race
With strange and awful prodigies dismays.
There is a cavern, whose portentous breath
Gives forth a chillness like the damp of death:
Before its entrance stands, with scowling brow,
Fierce Scorn, dire usher to th' abode of Woe:
Within, through all the fathomless extent,
"The voice of weeping heard, and loud lament:"
Reproach still urges, with incessant cries,
And keen regret her venom'd scourge applies.

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But, in the inmost gloom, a giant fiend
Musters the furies that his voice attend.
Pale Melancholy's faded form is there,
Grief, Terror, Rage, and Phrenzy's ghastly stare.
From the broad circles of his baleful eyes
Destruction flashes: who beholds him, dies.
This was that monstrous image which of yore,
Jove's awful daughter on her Ægis bore;
Which wither'd nations with portentous glare,
Gorgon the pest was call'd, but now Despair.

This doleful prison the revengeful mind
Of Archimage to Paladour assign'd;
Invok'd, with horrid rites, the pow'rs of hell,
And trac'd, with subtle art, the mystic spell.
But how young Cadwall, with Melissa's aid,
His dark designs with vengeance just repaid;
And Paladour beheld, with joyful eyes,
The smiling earth, the lustre of the skies;

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Once more allow'd the best delights to prove,
Adorn'd with glory, blest with gentle love;
After great perils past, and labours long,
Must be the subject of a future song.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

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THE

BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO III.

Digitized by Google

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THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO III.

Soon as Melissa heard the shriek of woe,
And saw the lucid stream polluted flow;
While ev'ry flow'r reclin'd its languid head,
The trees around their leafy honours shed,
As touch'd by sudden frost, a sullen sound
Sang through the vale, and shook the groaning ground:
Alarm'd, the fairy the dread signs perceiv'd,
And knew the crime by Archimage achiev'd.
She burns with wrath, and swift through air she flies,
Like some bright meteor in autumnal skies.

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But Cadwall, crown'd with splendid wreaths of fame,
And glowing now with passion's genial flame;
Oft for his Paladour to grief resign'd,
Revolv'd his fortunes with distracted mind.
Sudden, Melissa, like the gentle light
That tells the storm subsiding, meets his sight.
'Since the same cares our anxious thoughts divide,
'Behold, I bring thee aid,' the fairy cried.
'Sad Paladour, oppress'd by magic slight,
'Some dreary prison shuts from human sight;
'Where, vex'd by fiends, amid Tartarean gloons
'He loaths his life. But would'st thou learn his doom,
'My hand shall lead, where from th' enchanted ground
'Prophetic voices Merlin breathes around.
'(Worms have consum'd his corpse; his mighty mind
'Still dictates wisdom, and preserves mankind.)
'My tongue shall chant the verse which breaks the sleep
'Of death, and moves the spirits of the deep.
'Not that terrific sound, with forceful spell,
'Which binds the dark malignant pow'rs of hell,

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'But such sweet music, such celestial airs,
'As win good angels to assist our pray'rs.'
Cadwall, amaz'd, beheld the heav'nly grace,
With dazzling beauty, beaming from her face,
Her awful pow'r with trembling voice confest,
And bow'd submissive to her high behest.
She smil'd superior, and with soothing art
Confirm'd his hope, and cheer'd his anxious heart:
And as they past o'er wilds and mountains hoar,
Still charm'd his raptur'd ear with various lore.
Now in a narrow vale they held their way:
Here through the boughs scarce pierc'd the quiv'ring ray,
Which on the streams pellucid surface play'd:
The stream, as if enamour'd of the shade,
Appears to sleep; but soon impetuous flows,
Where bare and jutting rocks his course oppose,
Which rear aloft to heav'n their rugged forms,
And challenge all the fury of the storms.
'Lo these,' she cried, 'the hills of Dynevoure,
'Through which the rapid waves of Barry roar.

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'See to the right what monstrous piles arise,
'Stones heap'd on stones, which pierce the louring skies.
'Each might be deem'd, it fills so vast a space,
'Some mountain hurl'd by that Titanian race.
'Lo, there a fearful chasm, from whence exhale
'Dank steaming mists, and deadly vapours pale.
'Approach, but cautious, lest the damp of death
'Benumb thy senses, and suppress thy breath.
'Some daring footstep may have pass'd the bound,
'But none, returning from th' abyss profound,
'Has ever yet divulg'd to human race
'The dreadful secrets of that impious place.
'Incline thine ear, and hark, what tumult grows
'On every side! What still repeated blows
'Strike on the anvil! How the furnace roars!
'How from the forge the hissing metal pours!
'Shrill yells, and angry shouts, and clamours rise,
'Mix'd with deep groans, and lamentable cries.
'These from o'erlabour'd spirits long of yore,
'Chain'd to the task by Merlin's magic pow'r;

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'Proceed. 'Tis they that with impetuous sway,
'Have heav'd these rocky piles to upper day;
'Torn from the central earth. They strain; they toil;
'Heap flames on flames; in massy cauldrons boil
'Vast seas of molten brass; or pour around
'The metal, beat and shap'd, with thund'ring sound.
'Merlin, 'tis said, in his capacious mind,
'Some work surpassing human thought design'd;
'Some mighty work for sovereign beauty's sake,
'What time he lov'd the Lady of the Lake.
'Perhaps to bid, in this his favourite isle,
'With fruits of gold Hesperian gardens smile:
'Some glorious dome with matchless art to raise,
'To speak in future times his lady's praise:
'With walls of brass to fence the guarded land,
'Or join Ierne to the Cambrian strand.
'Vain man! whose folly boasts in wisdom's name!
'Vain man! whose power but works thy grief and shame!
'The faithless nymph with many an amorous wile,
'With many an honied word, and wreathed smile,

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'Allur'd the wizard to her secret bow'r,
'Surpriz'd, and made him captive to her pow'r.
'Then bids the spirits which around her stand,
'Convey her victim into fairy land.
'Ah, sad reward for love! Her cruel doom
'There clos'd him living in sepulchral gloom.
'Till his return the fiends to labour bound,
'With hideous ruin groaning earth confound:
'Excite the elements to monstrous war:
'(Heat, moisture, air, in dreadful conflict jar.)
'Restore to vapours their elastic force,
'To rend incumbent mountains in their course:
'And hurl vast seas upon the central fire,
'Till, rais'd in steam, the watery mass aspire,
'Level the lofty rocks, lift high the plain,
'And whelm whole kingdoms in the foaming main.
'Yet deem not that their mighty toils extend
'From age to age, directed to no end.
'Frail are the plans by mortal thought design'd,
'And weak and vain the wisest of mankind!

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'But heav'n's unchanging, and unerring will,
'All things obey, and all events fulfill!
'Ev'n these malignant sprites, constrain'd by fate,
'To man, whom of heaven's creatures most they hate,
'Are instruments of good: unconscious still
'Of what they do, and only bent on ill:
'From this fierce tumult particles combine,
'Of coal, and flint, calcareous, and saline:
'The principles from which each wondrous birth
'That with this robe of beauty clothes the earth,
'Proceeds. As this, or that prevails, the rose
'Gives forth her fragrance, or the violet blows,
'Springs the bright verdure, waves the golden grain,
'Or the majestic oak embrowns the plain.
'Hence too where space the porous earth supplies
'Sublim'd by heat, the steaming waters rise,
'Till near the cooler surface they subside,
'Burst forth in springs, in lucid rivers glide;
'Upon whose banks perpetual sweets appear,
'And flowers, and fruits, and foliage, grace the year.

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'Salubrious oft they flow, endu'd with force
'Of various minerals, gather'd in their course.
'The shepherd to the spring his lips applies;
'Unlook'd for health the healing spring supplies:
'The conscious swain his grateful homage pays,
'And pours his soul to heav'n in pray'r and praise.
'For, to the race of man, from lake and rill,
'The humble valley, and the lofty hill;
'The sunny champain, rich with fruits and grain;
'The gliding river; and the stormy main;
'In the still darkness of the fearful night;
'The moon's fair radiance; Hesper's dewy light;
'The orient beams that fire the eastern skies;
'A God, a God, the voice of nature cries!
'On him, my son, rely. His aid implore.
'He only can thy Paladour restore.
'Thou can'st not err, if truth thy course direct,
'Nor perish if Almighty pow'r protect.'
Discoursing thus, they reach the fertile plain,
Where that fair river to th' Hibernian main

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Directs his flood, and proudly o'er the stream,
The lofty towers of Maridunum gleam.
Not far from thence, deep in a shadowy dell,
Dwelt the great master of the magic spell.
What time, deceiv'd by that perfidious fay,
He bade a long farewell to cheerful day.
'Twas here Melissa made the knight restrain
His courser, and dismounting, fix the rein.
'Enter,' she cries, 'the cave. Whate'er betide,
'In heav'n, who favours virtuous deeds, confide.'
Then leads the way. Abrupt the deep descent,
Shagg'd with rude rocks, of fathomless extent,
And dark with tenfold night. Yet might the eye
Far off a faint, and glimm'ring ray descry;
Like the bright worm that scares the village maid,
Whose lover waits her in the lonely glade.
Scarce has his foot o'erstepp'd the sacred bound,
Some pow'r unseen uplifts him from the ground.
So swift his motion, that it leaves behind
The light, and rapid glances of the mind.

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A few short minutes measure half the way,
Which parts the centre of the earth from day.
And now, before the knight's astonish'd eyes,
Proud rooms of state in gorgeous beauty rise.
From the mid space beams forth a dazzling light,
Beyond the sun's meridian lustre bright.
Nor err'd Ferrara's bard,[a] whose piercing mind
The strange effect to magic art assign'd.
By fairy hands the glitt'ring dome was rais'd;
By fairy pow'r the radiant glory blaz'd.
As Cadwall and Melissa nearer drew,
Where stood the wizard's tomb reveal'd to view;
Forth from the marble breathe melodious airs;
The ghost, in strains divine, the will of fate declares;
Reveals the subtle train, the guileful sprite,
The doleful prison of the luckless knight;
And all the terrors of that gloomy cave,
Whose dreadful forms might well appall the brave.

[a] Ariosto.

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'From yonder column, lo, a golden shield
'Sheds dazzling radiance from its ample field;
'Nor does its inner surface, polish'd bright,
'With force diminish'd, back return the light.
'Bind on thine arm the splendid orb, and know
'How vast a boon the fav'ring fates bestow.
'Though all the pow'rs beneath the earth who dwell;
'Though Hecat, threeform'd goddess, weave the spell;
'Whate'er illusion magic art may raise,
'Its mirror still unclouded truth displays.
'Grasp too yon sword. Less dreadful flam'd of yore
'The thund'ring weapon bright Escalibore,[b]
'When Uther's son, from Iögerne's bed,[c]
'Foredoom'd a wond'rous birth, around him heap'd the dead.
'Proceed then fearless, where good omens lead:
'Proceed, and conquest crown thy gen'rous deed.'

[b] So called by Drayton.

[c] Et gravidam Arthuro fatali fraude Iögernen. MILTON.

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The prophet ceas'd. Th' exulting youth obeys,
Lifts the broad shield, the mighty sword displays.
Melissa waves her wand, and spirits bear
The nymph and chief again to upper air.
I pass the bold achievements of the knight;
The painful labours, and the hardy fight.
Scar'd by the terrors of the golden shield,
Pierc'd by th' enchanted sword, the monsters yield.
Ev'n that dire fury, seiz'd with wild affright,
Flies howling to the realms of ancient night,
Where midnight hags the lurid flame surround,
And darkness broods o'er Acheron[d] profound.

Meantime, behold the change! On every side
The rude rocks vanish, and the storms subside:
Where stood sharp icicles, and piles of snow,
Their blossom'd boughs the peach and almond shew;
While gentle gales the sweets of spring dispense,
And greet with balmy breath the joyful sense:

[d] And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me ere morn. MACBETH.

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The stream, o'er pebbles, murmuring takes its way,
Curl'd with the breeze, or glitt'ring with the day:
Soft verdure clothes the ground, and, as they tread,
The faëry cowslip bows her velvet head:
Aërial harps the notes of triumph raise,
And angel voices warble songs of praise,

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

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THE

BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO IV.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO IV.

Arriv'd in presence of th' immortal dame,
The cheek of Paladour was ting'd with shame.
He turn'd his head aside. His hand she press'd,
And smiling with benignant voice address'd.
'Full dearly, youth, thou hast experience bought;
'The punishment has sure aton'd the fault.
'Man is of wayward race, infirm of mind,
'Ardent in hope, but to the future blind:
'Urg'd by the stings of uncontroll'd desire,
'He courts destruction with a lover's fire:

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'But heav'n still views him with paternal care,
'Forgives his wand'rings, pities his despair.
'Then full of hope, with no unmanly fears,
'Essay th' adventure of the vale of tears.
'Each path, which to my bow'r conducts, to thee
'Is barr'd for ever by stern fate's decree,
'Save only one; a long and painful way,
'Where fraud ensnares, and prodigies dismay:
'Danger with giant arm, and scowling eye,
'Sends terror to the heart, and warns the foot to fly:
'Acrasia's[e] spell the cheated sense beguiles,
'And bright Morgana spreads destructive wiles:
'But thou be bold, be firm.' With glowing heart
Brave Cadwall in th' adventure claims a part.
'No chance again our fortunes shall divide;
'Thy toils I share,' the gen'rous warrior cried.

[e] The Alcina of Ariosto, and the Acrasia of Spenser, appear to be the same allegorical person, the genius of sensual pleasure. Morgana is the Fairy of Riches.

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'Not so. To one the glory is reserv'd.'
The Fay rejoins. 'Be heav'n's decree observ'd.'
Reluctant he obeys; then clasps the youth,
And binds upon his arm the shield of truth.
Now see the noble Paladour bestride
His bounding courser with a warrior's pride:
To right, to left, his ample buckler bear,
And brandish oft his long-unpractis'd spear.
Parting at length with many a kind farewell,
He plunges deep into a shadowy dell.
From either side huge oaks with mingling boughs,
Above his head a stately arch compose.
There noon's bright radiance scarce dispels the night,
And faintly marks the way with chequer'd light.
Deep-musing he proceeds. And now more rare
The trees their leafy summits lift in air;
Sharp furze and purple heath the hills o'erspread,
And jutting rocks appear with mossy head,
Till one sad waste extends, where howls the storm,
And famine brooding sits, with terrors ghastly form.

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The felon's carcase withering in the air,
Tells of strange deeds of horror acted there;
And fancy listens, in the passing gale,
While sad-complaining ghosts their fate bewail.
Just then the clash of arms arous'd the knight,
Clamour and cries, and tumult of the fight.
And soon he sees, against an armed band,
Where one, with sword alone, makes gallant stand:
Who seems the chief bestrides a stately steed,
And with loud voice commands the murd'rous deed.
The gen'rous Paladour with fury glows,
Nor stays to count the number of his foes:
He rushes forward with indignant cries,
And to the fight the felon crew defies.
The chief oppos'd was haughty, bold, and strong;
Well arm'd, and constant to maintain the wrong:
He fixes in the rest his mighty spear,
And spurs his steed, and meets the knight's career.
Proud and secure he ran. The frustrate blow
Glanc'd o'er the shoulder of his noble foe.

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Through shield and breast-plate driv'n with surer aim,
The lance of Paladour resistless came.
Supine the felon tumbles on the ground,
Spouts the black gore, his clanking arms resound.
Soon as they saw their cruel master slain,
Confus'd, and trembling, fled the dastard train:
But he they late assaulted on the ground,
Lay steep'd in blood, and gash'd with many a wound.
Brave Paladour dismounting hastes to bring
The cool wave, gushing fresh from living spring;
To the parch'd lip the wholesome draught applies,
And lightly sprinkles on the closing eyes;
Then gently lifts, and rests upon his breast,
The languid head, by death's cold weight opprest.
The dying man drew forth a mournful sigh,
And fix'd upon the knight his glassy eye:
'Blest be the warlike arm, whose pow'rful blow
'Aveng'd my wrongs, and laid the villain low.
'I die, nought grieving that my course is run;
'Force has achiev'd what sorrow else had done.'

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He ceas'd, and with a groan his spirit fled;
The pious warrior's tears bedew'd the dead.
When lo, a youth and aged man drew near,
Two of the stranger's train, who, smit with fear
And overmatch'd, had safety sought in flight,
And, hiding in the brakes, beheld the fight.
As sorrowing each by his dead master stands,
His state and story Paladour demands.
The elder thus replies. 'Untimely slain,
'A noble knight is stretch'd upon the plain.
'Oft has his prowess been the theme of fame:
'Proud was his birth, and Lanval was his name.
'Who has not listen'd to the tuneful lay
'Of a fair knight, lov'd by a haughty Fay?
'For him with doleful neighings, ev'ry spring,
'The faithful Palfrey makes the meadow ring:
'But mov'd at length to pity, and forgive,
'The nymph relenting bade her lover live:
'Recall'd his senses, with ambrosial kiss,
'And fondly sooth'd him in the bow'r of bliss.

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'Brave Lanval sprung from these. Though cold he lies,
'Ne'er on a better knight the sun shall rise.
'What need to tell how each Armoric lance
'By him was vanquish'd in the jousts of France;
'Or how, where Tweed, or Tay's fair waters flow,
'With matchless force he drove the barb'rous foe.
'Yet, humble in his love, a mortal dame
'First kindled in his breast affection's flame.
'He woo'd the fairest on Brigantian plains;
'The fairest maid the noblest knight obtains:
'So blest they seem'd it might have envy mov'd;
'But none would envy whom all prais'd and lov'd.
'At length the land resounds with loud alarms:
'His sovereign's mandate calls him forth to arms.
'Through all the castle spreads contagious grief;
'The frantic bride refuses all relief:
'Roll'd in the dust, with tresses torn, she lies,
'And often calls on death, with piteous cries.
'Brave Lanval's breast as keen affliction tears;
'But manly grief a firmer aspect wears.

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' And now the trumpet sounds, the martial train
' In order'd files move slowly o'er the plain:
' When Lanval thus address'd the friend he lov'd,
' From childhood's playful hours his faith was prov'd:
" Compell'd, to distant lands, in arms I go
" To bear sharp combat to my country's foe.
" Victorious still, in battle I delight,
" Nor fear the issue of the dang'rous fight:
" But other cares molest. This wide domain,
" My fair paternal seat, this fertile plain,
" I to thy care commit, and more than life,
" And all this fair inheritance, my wife.
" By all the pleasures of our early years!
" By all thou lov'st! by all that life endears!
" Fair fame, and faithful friends, thy mistress' smile,
" And blest repose from honourable toil!
" Untouch'd, unstain'd by fraud or force, restore
" The sacred charge!" He said, and Urien swore.

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'But mark the sequel of the shameful tale,
'O'er truth and knighthood, lawless fires prevail;
'The friend from childhood prov'd was false, the wife was frail.
'And soon officious fame, with busy tongue,
'To noble Lanval's ear proclaim'd the wrong.
'At first he doubts, but as the rumour grew
'Confirm'd with circumstance, he deems it true.
'Stung to the soul, no more he brooks delay,
'Vaults on his steed, and measures back the way.
'No warder stands upon his castle wall,
'And the blast howls through his deserted hall.
'Waste are his fields, and all his fair domains
'A gloomy void, where desolation reigns.
'As when a ship, by furious tempest tost,
'Hangs on the rocks which guard some savage coast,
'High o'er the deck the rushing surges roar,
'And hurl her bursting sides against the shore:
'The refluent wave upon the barren strand
'Leaves some poor wounded wretch to crawl to land:

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'Bleeding and faint, o'ercome with toil and pain,
'Hope gives him force the lofty cliff to gain:
'But when around he throws his anxious eyes
'And sees one waste, extended to the skies;
'The tiger's foot upon the sand imprest,
'But man's abode no wreaths of smoke attest;
'His heart within him dies. So Lanval stood,
'Despair and horror chill'd the vital flood.
'A rustic now th' events in order tells,
'And all the guilt of that vile pair reveals.
'Stern wrath succeeds to grief. His mighty mind
'A vengeance equal to the crime design'd:
'His martial band to summon from afar,
'And crush his proud perfidious foe with war.
'But Urien soon a trusty spy alarms,
'And Lanval is beset with ambush'd arms.
'Foully, thou saw'st, his generous blood was spilt,
'And murther seal'd th' adulterous robber's guilt.'
With grief the knight, whose soul was just and good,
Heard the sad tale of treason and of blood:

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And much he wonder'd, pondering in his mind,
The social wants connecting human kind;
A friend the trust of friendship should betray,
And, having injur'd, arm his hand to slay.

As forward on his destin'd way he fares,
The widening vale a brighter aspect wears.
Now many a shelter'd cottage meets his eyes,
And gentle slopes, with waving harvests, rise.
The cheerful villagers, their labour done,
With sport and song pursue the setting sun.
And many a youth, and many a rosy maid,
While twilight reigns, yet lingers in the glade.

Now Paladour a stately mansion sees,
Full richly dight, and girt with tufted trees.
The spacious hall a thousand tapers light,
And, darting far their beams, dispel the night;
While sweetest music floating in the air
Bespeaks no rude assembly feasting there.
The soothing sound the youthful warrior chears;
Already pass'd he deems the vale of tears:

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And, scarce arriv'd before the lofty gate,
With ready zeal th' officious menials wait:
While one proclaims a noble warrior near,
This holds his bridle, that receives his spear.
The seneschal before him lowly bends,
And o'er the court with seemly state attends.
Their sports at once the fair assembly leave,
And vie who with best welcome shall receive.
Each dame was lovely, courteous ev'ry knight,
Alike their graceful forms and sweet discourse invite.
The banquet ended, decent mirth and joy
Still for a while the gentle train employ:
Here some fair nymph pours forth the tuneful song,
And with soft rapture fills the list'ning throng:
While those of knightly deeds rejoice to hear,
These whisper tales of love in beauty's ear.
At length a stripling shakes aloft the dice,
And 'Who will dare to stand the throw?' he cries.
At that most potent, that enchanting sound,
The throng with eager haste comes crowding round.

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The syren pours her tuneful throat in vain;
The bard, unnotic'd, sounds th' heroic strain;
And yielding beauty blushing longs to hear,
But no seducing whisper meets her ear.
The knight, whom no desires of gain infest,
Perplex'd with doubtful thought, retires to rest.
And now the skies with day resplendent glow:
He rises, but alas! to scenes of woe.
The stripling lies before him cold in death,
By his own frantic hand depriv'd of breath.
A mother here, with grief and anguish wild,
Strains to her throbbing breast her beggar'd child.
Meanwhile, all unconcern'd, the thoughtless crew
Prepare their wonted revels to renew.
Them Paladour beholds with scorn and hate,
And mounts his steed, and flies th' accursed gate.
Nor far had ridden ere a knight and dame,
Rich in attire, tow'rd that fair castle came;
And passing blithe they seem'd, and laugh'd aloud:
Their snorting palfreys pranc'd, as of their burthen proud.

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The courteous Paladour salutes them fair,
Scarce bending, on they ride, with scornful air.
A little farther Paladour descries,
Where, near the way, a wretched female lies.
Prone in the dust she lies, like one forlorn,
Her hair dishevell'd, and her garments torn.
Pitying he raises, and recalls her breath;
But on her forehead hangs the damp of death:
Sunk is her cheek, her faded lips are pale,
And o'er her haggard eyes thick shades prevail.
Yet seem'd she lovely in that piteous plight:
A savage heart had melted at the sight.
So droops a tender flower, which vernal rain
Bedews, and gentle zephyrs sooth in vain:
The passing share a secret wound has made:
Fast ebbs its life, and all its beauties fade.

Not distant stood a mansion, large and fair,
Where all bespoke the master Fortune's care:
Thither the knight the fainting damsel bore:
The churl, with threat'ning voice, forbade the door.

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Scarce Paladour his rising wrath contains;
From instant vengeance scarce his hand refrains;
But the sad damsel rais'd her languid head,
And thus, in broken accents, feebly said:
'Cease, gen'rous youth, ah cease this fruitless pain,
'My heart is grateful, but all aid is vain.
'A stranger's pity sooths my parting hour,
'While he for whom a father's curse I bore,
'Unmov'd beheld the bitter tears I shed,
'And left me, friendless, houseless, wanting bread.
'Even now, as faint beside the public way,
'Exhausted, famish'd, agoniz'd I lay,
'With the proud dame, from whom my sorrows flow,
'He pass'd, he knew, and rudely mock'd my woe.
'I die. My breaking heart can bear no more:
'A moment yet, and all my pains are o'er.
'Not e'en this bitter pang can heal my fame:
'Oh might th' oblivious grave conceal my shame!'
She spoke. She died. And Paladour, who saw
Crimes following crimes, perverting nature's law,

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Which love and charity enjoins to man,
To loath the whole degenerate race began:
Yet still he hopes Melissa's bower to gain
On earth, there only peace and virtue reign:
And gentle love in flowery fetters binds,
With faith that knows no change, congenial minds;
There truth and friendship dwell; and there alone
Fierce wrong and fraud, are but by rumour known.

END OF CANTO THE FOURTH.

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THE

BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO V.

Digitized by Google

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THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO V.

TEMPT we, with daring wing, a loftier flight!
Oh might some gentle muse, or lady bright,
Inspire, as when the peerless Gloriane
Stoop'd from her throne to hear the tuneful swain!
Fierce wars, and faithful love then moraliz'd his strain.
May no rude censure blast my feebler rhyme!
Great was the virtue of that antique time
When sheath'd in arms, and champion of the right,
Forth issu'd on the plain th' advent'rous knight.
Though pain and dangers glare athwart his way,
Nor pain, nor dangers, his firm soul dismay:

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Nor from fair honour's path, and sacred truth,
Could siren pleasure lure the gen'rous youth.
Forth from the baleful treasury of hell
The foe of man then cull'd the magic spell.
Such as, exulting 'midst pale heaps of slain,
Erictho mutter'd on th' Emathian plain: [f]
Or as Armida breath'd of softer power,
To bind Rinaldo in her fragrant bower.
Hence battlements and forests wrapp'd in fire;
"Gorgons, and hydras, and chimæras dire;" [g]
Melodious sounds, soft looks, deluding smiles;
Soul-mining whispers sweet, and amorous wiles;
And, in the specious garb of virtue drest,
Corruption stealing to th' unguarded breast.

False Archimago saw, with fierce disdain,
His dæmons vanquish'd, his enchantments vain.
Ev'n then dire omens of impending fate
Chill'd all his soul with fear; but ranc'rous hate

[f] Lucan's Pharsalia.
[g] Milton.

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Prevail'd, and in his unrelenting mind
More deadly fury rouz'd, and greater ills design'd.
No bound th' accursed thirst of vengeance knows,
Indulg'd, or frustrate, fiercer still it glows;
With blood insatiate, unsubdu'd by tears,
The pangs it can no more inflict it bears,
Preys on itself, and its own entrails tears!

He sought two sister nymphs, more fair than morn,
Adorn'd with every grace, and heav'nly born;
But false, perverse, and merciless of heart,
Deep skill'd in magic lore, and baneful art.
Hesperian poets, in immortal verse,
The woes they wrought in after days rehearse.
But not as yet Orlando's matchless might,
Morgana's giant guards had quell'd in fight:
Nor bold Rogero, on his flying steed,
Alcina's palace reach'd, and num'rous captives freed.
Alcina nam'd in Ariosto's strain,
Acrasia by Eliza's shepherd swain,

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When, soaring now above the rustic throng,
He pour'd to future times his high mysterious song.
To these the seer complains; nor they refuse
Their ready aid, when hell-born malice sues.
With soften'd heart, which warring passions move,
While just disdain with tender pity strove,
Lo, where young Paladour pursues his way.
Before him now a mighty forest lay,
So thick with briers, and tangled thorns o'erspread,
It seem'd as never mark'd by human tread.
One track alone appear'd, athirst for blood,
Nightly by which forth issued from the wood
The savage prowling fierce, th' unwieldy bear,
Or wolf with rapid pace and lurid glare.
Back shrinks the restive steed. The knight applies
The goading spur; but, cautious of surprize,
Looks round, and firmly grasps his pond'rous spear.
Th' obedient steed moves on, and snorting shakes with fear.

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With toil he journied long, nor yet his ken
Perceiv'd, through opening boughs, th' abode of men.
Sudden he hears a lamentable cry,
The piercing shriek of female agony.
Loud as the hurricane's tremendous roar,
Which hurls th' Atlantic on the Carrib shore,
Some mighty power, with unresisted force,
Makes the tall saplings bow before his course.[h]
Beneath his thund'ring footsteps shakes the ground,
The deep caves bellow, and the hills resound.
Suspense and awe some minutes held the knight,
But soon th' approaching giant tower'd in sight.
Behind him thrown his bloody mace was slung;
A lion's spoil was o'er his shoulder flung;
And, through the darkness of his shaggy brow,
His flaming eye-ball blasts the plain below.
A struggling damsel in his grasp is borne,
With hair dishevel'd, and with garments torn:

h ——— ——— Dat euntibus ingens
Silva locum, magnoque cedunt virgulta fragore. VIRGIL.

Digitized by Google

Rude bonds her wrist, and snowy ancle press;
The giant laughs, and mocks her sore distress;
With screams she rends the air. Th' undaunted knight
Threatens aloud, and dares th' unequal fight.
But as, with furious stride, the foe drew near,
Th' affrighted courser stops in mid career,
Turns short, and scours with headlong speed the plain,
Nor heeds his lord's command, nor curbing rein.
Ill brooks the warrior that inglorious flight;
He springs to earth, and waits on foot the fight:
One arm with lifted shield his head protects;
The right his lance's glitt'ring point directs;
With bended knees he stands, and watchful eye,
To shun th' assault, th' advantage to descry.
The raging monster heaven and earth defies,
And rushes on the knight with dreadful cries.
It chanc'd, above the level of the field,
A rocky fragment rose with fern conceal'd.
It caught his foot, and stagg'ring on he came,
Robb'd of his force, and frustrate of his aim.

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The knight, who shun'd with nimble bound the foe,
Beneath his lifted arm directs the blow:
By fortune guided to a mortal part,
Between the ribs it pass'd, and reach'd his heart.
Loud was the roar, and terrible the cry,
The falling giant hurl'd against the sky;
Prone without sense the carcase fell, and beat
Awhile the sounding earth with quiv'ring feet.
Meantime with eager haste the knight unbinds
The woeful dame, and calls the gentle winds
Upon her brow, and swelling breast to blow,
And bid once more the vital current flow,
Suspended now by fear. With frequent sighs,
At length the maid unclos'd her languid eyes:
So breaks the vernal sun through show'ry skies.
Scar'd at the steaming blood, and armed knight,
Yet stern and dreadful from his recent fight,
Low to the earth her trembling knee she bent
With beating bosom, doubtful of th' event:

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But when she saw the lawless giant slain,
And heard the victor speak in soothing strain;
Soon re-assur'd, fair hope and gentle joy
Smil'd on her lips, and lighten'd in her eye.
Her modest cheek suffus'd with lively red,
Thus to the knight, in humble guise, she said.
'Fair knight, heroic worth were ill repaid
'By grateful praises of a simple maid;
'But, know, I serve an high and peerless queen:
'Great is her power, and goddess-like her mien.
'The proud disturber of her gentle reign,
'Fierce as he was, and strong, thine arm has slain.
'Joys above price, immortal and divine,
'Her voice bestows, and these shall sure be thine.'
While yet the damsel speaks, by just degrees
Harmonious sounds come floating in the breeze,
Sweet as the sirens in Sicilian seas;
Or as, in Tempe's vale, th' Aonian choir
Responsive to Apollo's golden lyre.

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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] fierce annoy,
[illegible] prompt to gentle joy.
[illegible] extended lay.
[illegible] and bright with day.
[illegible] damsel stood,
[illegible] goddess of the flood :
[illegible] mood, and timid grace,
[illegible] beauty to her face;

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About her soft lips play'd a dimpled smile,
Of power to curb the strong, the wise beguile;
While now and then, and almost as by chance,
She darted on the knight a tender glance:
His inmost soul the witching glance alarms;
But she seems all unconscious of her charms.
The rescu'd dame with out-spread arms she meets,
And kindly, with a sister's fondness, greets.
Then both, in courteous phrase, th' admiring knight
To the fair palace of their queen invite.
'Beyond the silver lake's expanse it lies,
'And we thy willing guides.' Nor he denies.
Then wav'd that second maid her graceful hand;
A gilded vessel soon, at her command,
Appears self-mov'd, and quickly gains the land.
They enter in. Nor wind it asks, nor tides;
But, as instinct with life, o'er the smooth surface glides.
Soft breath'd the gentle air; the gentle wave,
Rippling beside the keel, soft murmur gave.

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Then, lest the way should tedious seem, and long,
The nymph, who rul'd the bark, rais'd many a song.
Sweet was her voice, and polish'd was her phrase,
And sweet the subject of her vary'd lays.
Of amorous wiles she sung, and rapturous joy,
The sportful triumphs of the Paphian boy,
Whose cares delight; whose very torments please;
Best meed of warlike toil; best charm of ease.
'Quit, thoughtless youth, thine armour's cumb'rous load!
'Not amid danger glory makes abode.
'Instruct thine eyes with eager love to glow;
'Bid from thy lip love's soft persuasion flow:
'The fleece of gold shall not alone be thine,
'But she, the royal maid, of form and mind divine.
'Though Mars great Hector's dauntless bosom fires,
'And wonders at the deeds himself inspires,
'Not less renown the blooming chief attends,
'Who, led by Venus, Helen's bed ascends.
'Blest youth, through time propitious powers prolong
'Thy joys, immortal as Mæonian song!

Digitized by Google

'The queen of beauty gave thee pow'r to please,
'Gay wit, and gentle speech, and graceful ease.
'Pallas with terror cloth'd Pelides' brow,
'Nor made him dreadful only to the foe:
'His awful look the boldest Greek alarms,
'And fair Briseis trembles in his arms.
'Fierce as he is his proudest boast is vain:
'The mighty victor falls, by Paris slain!'
The song insidious melts his manly mind,
Amus'd at first, but soon to doubt inclin'd.
Oh blissful lot! with wreaths of deathless fame,
To twine fair Venus' gifts, and smiles of lovely dame.
The nymph, now conscious of her power, with skill
Winds round his heart, and captive holds his will;
Suffus'd with woe, or panting with desire,
Like Sappho, while she breathes her soul of fire:
Or when more blithe she wakes the jovial lay,
To festive mirth inclin'd, and youthful play.
Delirious with sweet poison, thus the knight
Plung'd in the snare. Meantime arose to sight

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That island, where Alcina, in her bow'r
New dight by spring, expects her paramour.
Swift flew the gilded bark, and reach'd the fatal shore.
A train of graceful youths, and maidens fair,
To greet the noble guest kind welcome bear.
Smooth was the way, and pleasant was the scene,
Which led to the bright dwelling of the queen.
From tufted groves, whose breath is balmy sweet,
Birds with their wood-notes wild his coming greet,
And the fresh herbage springs his steps to meet.
Yet there the lion shakes his tawny mane,
And frequent tigers stalk along the plain:
Boars whet their tusks. That uncouth sight alarms
Th' astonish'd warrior. He unsheaths his arms.
Laugh'd those fair damsels, and rebuk'd the train
Of savage beasts, who cow'ring fled amain,
Or, crouching low, to lick their feet drew near,
And gently fawn'd, expressing love and fear.

The palace now they reach'd. The festive sound
Of harps his welcome told, and all around

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Breath'd odours, while the fair attendants prest,
With gentle duty, from his manly breast
To draw the pond'rous armour. Loosely laid
On silken couch, and in soft vest array'd,
Supplied by eastern looms, where Ganges laves
Benares, which adores his sacred waves,
He yields his soul to bliss, nor ponders more,
Heroic deeds of arms, amid the battle's roar.
Then to the banquet, when the lunar beam,
Mingling with day, sheds o'er the unruffled stream
Soft light, he moves: gay flowers the path bestrew,
And hopes of unknown joys in his pleas'd bosom glow.

Then first his eyes Alcina's form adore.
Such golden Venus met her Belamour,
Whose annual wound, the flow'ry shore along,
The Syrian nymphs lament, in sweet, smooth dittied song.
Soft are the smiles which beam upon her face:
Soft smiles, but temper'd with majestic grace.

Now to her guest behold the dame present
The nectar'd bowl, which he, alone intent

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On that fair face, scarce to his lips applies,
But drinks large draughts of passion from her eyes.
Shrin'd in a rich pavilion sat the queen:
Without, a strange and monstrous rout was seen,
Of savage forms all kinds: the shaggy bear,
Such as the seaman views, astonish'd, where,
Near to the pole, his dark and cheerless reign
Stern Winter holds: the terror of the plain.
Through which the consecrated Ganges pours
His waters, there the mighty tiger lours,
Term'd royal, for his strength and matchless sway,
From the thick jungle springing on his prey:
There the voracious wolf; the fox obscene;
The mimic ape appear'd; and there was seen
The sluggish ass; the lion's lordly pride;
The rank and bearded goat; and, by his side,
The swine, on offal vile, aad garbage foul,
Wallowing profuse, which gluts his filthy soul.
From stalls and dens, let loose, they swarm, they pour
Through all the court, and with fierce haste devour
Th' allotted food. Echoes with loud uproar

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The roof. Now fury grows, and thirst of blood:
Dreadful, with bristled mane, the lion stood:
The tiger crouching near, with fiery eyes,
And waving tail, marks out his trembling prize.
The fair enchantress view'd intent awhile
The herd, and mock'd them with disdainful smile,
Then bent her angry brow. The keeper's voice,
And scourge resounds, and the rude rabble flies.

Much marvell'd at that sight the noble youth:
Doubt fill'd his mind. But now the shield of truth,
With his neglected armour, thrown aside,
Lay useless; while Alcina, like a bride,
Soft blooming, breathing love, and fond desire,
Shot through each trembling nerve resistless fire.
Thus, in delicious madness, many a day
Flew swiftly by. Yet not without allay
The bliss, while often in the lonely hour
The angel Conscience on his ear would pour
His warning, and with forceful touch pourtray'd
Melissa's bower, and his deserted maid.

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Such musings fill'd his mind, when, lo, it chanc'd
His eye upon the lofty chamber glanc'd,
Where, all deform'd with rust, in order'd files
Stood rang'd of many a luckless knight the spoils.
Anxious he sought his own. And soon their light,
Not yet by time grown dim, attracts his sight.
Eager he springs to seize. With shrieks and cries
The palace rings, and all around him rise
Terrific forms, which clubs and lances wield,
And crowd to thwart, and drive him from the shield.
He, rouz'd by hope, their threats and force disdains;
Presses undaunted on, and the bright prize obtains.

Th' illusion fled. No more, with wanton wing,
Light zephyrs fling around the balmy spring;
No leafy bower excludes the sultry beam;
No vale is vocal with the murmuring stream;
Rich chambers, breathing late Arabia's gale,
Gloomy and waste, infectious stench exhale.
And that fair dame, with vice polluted breast,
His new purg'd eyes, and chasten'd thoughts detest;

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Then in the shield's clear mirror he surveys
The savage beastly crew. The shield displays
Forms once in human semblance cast, defac'd
By arts of that curs'd witch, and foul disgrac'd.
Around their hearts, base, sordid passions twine
Indissoluble bonds, and quench the spark divine.

Mov'd at the sight, he sheds some pitying tears,
Then, joyful at the danger 'scap'd, he fares
Forth on his way, with courage undismay'd,
And prudence by experience firmer made.

END OF THE FIFTH CANTO.

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THE

BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO VI.

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THE BOWER OF MELISSA.

A TALE.

CANTO VI.

MEANTIME th' enchantress, frustrate of her prey,
Cuts through the liquid air her rapid way,
Borne on the dragon's wing. So fled of yore
Medea from Corinthus' blazing tow'r,
With parricide yet reeking, breathing still
Vengeance, and meditating future ill.
Soon to Morgana's glitt'ring dome she came;
Intent on spells of pow'r she found the dame.
Upon th' unhallow'd altar shone the fire,
The flames and sparkles to the roof aspire.

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A cauldron in the midst, whose fatal womb
Matur'd the seeds of mischief yet to come.
Beside it Archimago stood, and threw
Th' ingredients of the charm in order due.
And oft he paus'd, and wav'd his wand amain,
While the fell sisters rais'd the magic strain.
With smooth deceit was mix'd the flatt'ring art;
Pride and self-love, corrupters of the heart;
The lust of pow'r; and the vain thirst of fame;
And avarice, unpitying, void of shame.
Dark fiends, the charm to perfect, round them throng,
Mov'd by the terrors of the mystic song.

Long time their arts were vain. The youthful knight
Was prudent, cautious, and unmatch'd in fight.
Through toil, at last, of the long irksome way,
Worn, and oppress'd with heaviest sleep he lay.
They fling their spells abroad. Around his head
Light phantoms gather, and illusions spread.
But chief their care was bent to reave the youth
Of his bright shield. What could they fear like truth?

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From thing so holy must their hands refrain,
Nor dare to violate with touch profane:
Yet, what they may, with subtle art they frame
Its like in form, another and the same.
Not more exact that snowy semblance bright,
Which erst deceiv'd full many a fairy knight;
Till, from her spotted side recoiling fell
The girdle of the fairest Florimell.
They place it near, that caught by specious shew,
Or negligent, he may his guard forego.
Around them next a veil of mist they threw,
Intent the progress of their spell to view.

Sudden, from many an instrument of war,
Triumphant symphonies resound afar.
Near and more near the swelling music comes;
Ring the loud cymbals, roll the rattling drums;
And now the trumpet's cheerful clangors rise;
And now the shout of thousands rends the skies.
Starts Paladour from sleep, with hurry'd speed
Seizes his armour, springs upon his steed:
Then laugh'd his foes, who saw their wiles succeed.

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And, lo, a pompous pageant moves along;
Far as the eye can reach extends the throng:
The heralds in their various garb appear,
With pursuivants and serjeants in the rear.
The robes of peace, with armour mix'd, declare
Joy animates the march, not sanguine war.
Troops of bold knights their glitt'ring crests display,
Their prancing coursers spurn the echoing way:
Then senators with grave majestic gait,
That speak the greatness of a mighty state:
Courtiers, by ensigns of high office known,
Such as become a proud imperial throne;
And lovely dames, inspiring soft delight,
While dress with nature strives which most shall charm
the sight.
High in the midst a gallant knight is seen,
Erect his port, and confident his mien:
Sublime upon a golden car he rides;
On either hand the gazing throng divides:
Eight steeds the chariot draw, and snorting bound,
And champ their bits, and fling the foam around.

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Before unnumber'd minstrels lift their voice,
And virgin choirs in sweetest notes rejoice:
While this was still the burthen of the song,
'Graceful as Phœbus, as Alcides strong,
'Empire to thee, and beauty's smile belong.'
The crowd give way, and the procession past
Close in, and follow with rude clam'rous haste.
Much wonder'd Paladour, and sought to know
The great occasion of that splendid shew.
He ask'd a youth, who seem'd of gentle kind;
The courteous stranger bow'd, and thus rejoin'd:
'Illustrious knight, the pageant thou hast seen,
'Proclaims the wedding of our glorious queen.
'The bridegroom we conduct, whose fame in arms
'Deserves the guerdon of immortal charms.
'And is the splendour of her ancient throne,
'And all her blissful realm to thee unknown?
'Lo rich Pactolus rolls o'er sands of gold;
'Sabea's incense, India's gems, behold;

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'Each various region's various wealth explore,
'Or bring the son of David's vaunted store;
'Or all combin'd; unmatch'd would still remain
'The mighty treasures of our sovereign's reign.
'With time coëval, the vast heaps appear
'Still undiminish'd, each succeeding year.
'Three lovely nymphs attend upon her state:[1]
'What tongue of man their beauty shall relate?
'Oh, far less charming in the Idalian grove,
'The sister graces, and the queen of love:
'Or rather here the graces learn to please,
'And golden Venus borrows charms from these.
'Such is their power, their magic smiles dispense
'Fair forms, sweet sounds, whatever sooths the sense;
'Whatever curious, useful, or refin'd,
'Instructs, illumines, and delights the mind.
'But come, thyself the royal court behold;
'The queen decrees a tournament to hold.

[1] The Fine Arts, Learning, and Good-breeding.

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'Four days consum'd in banquet and in fight,
'The fifth is destin'd to the nuptial rite.'
Soon Paladour assents, the tale has fir'd
His soul, and boundless thirst of fame inspir'd.
Proceeds meanwhile the stranger to relate
What evils vex, what dangers threat the state.
'Here envy lurks, there force and vengeance storm,
'And there ambition lifts his giant form;
'But now, restrain'd by that victorious arm,
'No clouds of war the tranquil land alarm;
'The tumults of the troubled ocean cease,
'And sleeps the tempest in reluctant peace.'
But still the guardian fairy, hov'ring near,
Watch'd o'er her fav'rite knight with ceaseless care;
The sacred shield to noble Cadwall's hands
She gave, and thus to willing ears commands;
'Haste, mount thy steed, and grasp th' enchanted blade,
'The sorcerer's towers with instant force invade.
'Ev'n now, ev'n now, our fell malicious foes
'With snares th' unconscious Paladour enclose:

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'But his lov'd head I will myself protect,
'Their spells unravel, and their charms detect.
'And well I trust Morgana's arts shall fail,
'And truth and virtue against hell prevail.'

No need to tell with what a gracious air,
The queen to Paladour gave welcome fair.
Four times shrill clarions, with the dawning day,
Rous'd noble knights their prowess to display.
Four times victorious, in the martial game,
Brave Paladour triumphant notes proclaim.
Four evenings saw th' illustrious train prolong
The feast, and Paladour the theme of song.

Now the fifth morning rose, and smil'd so fair,
So fragrant and so pure the gentle air,
It seem'd that, with auspicious influence sweet,
Those nuptials nature's self-design'd to greet,
And when, the throng'd spectators all dispos'd
In order due, the tumult was compos'd;
The bright Morgana in her royal place,
Shone with such modest, yet majestic grace,

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The gazing crowd stood fix'd in fond amaze,
And ev'ry rapturous voice breaks forth in praise.
Rich gifts, from many a tributary king,
Ambassadors in solemn order bring,
By heralds led. Each, in his master's name,
Harangues in turn the fair imperial dame:
Then to the bridegroom, where he sits in state,
They turn, and his great actions celebrate:
But chief they hail him fortune's fav'rite care,
Blest with a gift, more excellent and rare
Than ever mortal yet from heav'n obtain'd,
Than poets fabling fancy ever feign'd.
As when some stately stream its current leads
Through ancient groves, and flow'r-bespangled meads,
If on the bank a cliff with stately brow,
Breasting the wave, surveys the plain below,
The master there, to spread through time his praise,
Some fair and stately dome decrees to raise:
But, through the soil the moisture making way,
Shakes the high mound with unperceiv'd decay;

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While, ev'ry hour, the never-ceasing tide
Beneath some fragment severs from the side,
Till many a gaping fissure rends the wall,
And the whole fabric totters to its fall.
So Paladour drinks in at ev'ry vein,
Through ev'ry sense, the heart-corrupting bane.
Now wealth and pomp allure his fond desire;
Now love of praise and emulation fire;
And, as the queen in all her charms appears,
Dark envy stings, and jealous fury tears.
Malignant passions! whose detested pow'r
Blots from his mind Melissa's tranquil bow'r.
And, scarce restrain'd by decent sense of right,
He burns with fierce impatience for the fight:
'From arms my rival's proud pretensions flow,
'As just my claim, who never fear'd a foe.'

The native subjects next their homage pay;
Successive they approach in meet array,
Marshall'd with care. Great lords their offerings bear,
And warlike troops in glitt'ring arms appear.

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The counsellors and judges of the land
Bow to the throne, and rang'd around it stand.
Then deputies from many a city fair,
Whose splendid train and gifts their wealth declare;
And royal companies of merchants pour
From earth's remotest bounds, a precious store.
The empire, where the yellow river flows,
And cruel sires their progeny expose,
Its glossy silk, and rich with varied dyes
And varied forms, its porcelain supplies:
Her lacquer'd ware Japan: Arabia yields
The perfume of her fam'd Sabean fields:
The gorgeous east her glitt'ring gems bestows,
Her fragrant wood that emulates the rose,
Her precious gums: the Arctic region cold,
Her furs; and Afric, elephant and gold.

This proud procession pass'd, lo, next advanc'd
Those three fair nymphs. Each heart with rapture danc'd.
The first came forth, and graceful mov'd along,
Confess'd a goddess by the gazing throng.

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Upon her brow a laurel wreath she wore,
A golden wand in her fair hand she bore;
While, like the am'rous turtle's varying breast,
The colours shifted of her airy vest;
A dazzling lustre sparkled from her eyes;
Earth, the unfathom'd sea, and boundless skies
Her glance pervades, and, 'midst the realms of light,
New modes of being sees in vision bright.
She wav'd the golden wand, and straight to view
The spacious halls more large and splendid grew,
Fair columns rise, and graceful arches bend,
And rich with gold the fretted roofs ascend.
Not Corinth, when in all her pride she shone;
Not fam'd Palmyra, great Zenobia's throne;
Minerva's city, queen of arts refin'd;
Or Rome, the mighty mistress of mankind;
So proud a structure saw, so nobly grac'd
With rich materials, and proportions chaste.
She wav'd the golden wand, and, at her call,
Obedient colours clothe the lofty wall:

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All forms, all hues, which nature owns display;
The shades of ev'ning, and the blaze of day:
While wond'ring eyes with holy awe behold
Kings, heroes, patriots, sages, fam'd of old:
Jove bends his sable brows; and breathing joy,
The queen of beauty meets the Syrian boy:
The queen of beauty in her Paphian bowers,
When love has dress'd her fragrant couch with flowers.
Again she waves her wand,—the ductile brass
Flows into shape, and lives the marble mass.
The gods their majesty no more conceal,
And beauty's perfect form to mortal sense reveal.

The second nymph with mien more awful came,
About her temples play'd a lambent flame,
Witness of heav'nly birth. Yet mark of pow'r,
Sceptre, or rod, or circlet, none she bore.
But by one hand sustain'd a book appear'd,
A polish'd mirror in her right she rear'd.
There, to th' inquiring mind, the goddess brings,
In clear reflexion, all created things.

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She stood before the footstool of the queen:
She spoke, and lo, a mimic heav'n was seen.
There the great father of the circling years,
The glorious sun in all his state appears.
Round him, rejoicing in his vital force,
The planets roll in their appointed course.
Earth meets exulting his prolific ray,
And opens all her bosom to the day.
Then shone the mistress of the peaceful hour,
Of softer influence, not inferior pow'r:
She from each clime collected brings the dew,
Whose fragrant show'rs the fertile glebe renew,
The mighty waters flow beneath her sway,
And swelling tides her constant rule obey.
Next see the nymph the sacred page disclose,
Where past events in order just repose.
Before the royal seat appears unroll'd
The long succession of the years of old.
'Whatever change beyond the reach of thought,
'In earth or heav'n, the wizard Time has wro'

[k] Collins.

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Whate'er of science patient search has scann'd;
Whate'er vain man's unresting mind has plann'd;
The statesman's labours, and the warrior's rage;
Recorded stand in that illumin'd page,
Which gives, unbought by danger or by pain,
The wisdom for which thousands toil in vain.
The goddess then invokes th' immortal nine,
Daughters of memory, of race divine.
Sweet, yet sonorous, was the varied song,
And still the echoing roofs the strain prolong.
Arms were the theme, and wealth and mighty sway,
And sovereign beauty, which ev'n gods obey.
The throng assenting loud applauses raise,
With smiles the queen receives the artful praise.
Then fresh and radiant as the early dawn,
When first with glitt'ring drops it decks the lawn;
And as the southern air, on fluttering wing,
Kisses the tender blossoms of the spring;
So lightly forth that third fair sister trips,
A smile like Hebe's on her rosy lips.

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Iris had dipp'd the many colour'd vest,
That, waving, half conceal'd her lovely breast;
Her slender fingers held with matchless grace,
Fill'd with nectareous dew, a crystal vase,
From which some drops to reach the queen she threw,
And swiftly round the fair assembly flew,
Soft gliding, with a soul-enchanting air,
And sprinkling still the precious moisture rare;
Then sought her sisters with a fond embrace,
Who gaz'd delighted on her charming face.
Such potency was in that heav'nly dew,
What fairest seem'd before, now fairer grew;
With more enchanting beauty shone the queen;
More winning grace in those bright nymphs was seen;
Sweet dreams of bliss each raptur'd mind employ,
And ev'ry heart expands with love and joy.

Vain flattering dreams, and transient hopes of man!
Sudden through all the crowd a murmur ran.
While some are struck with terror and amaze,
These eagerly inquire, those lean to gaze.

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Now from without resounds a fearful cry,
Some rush into the hall, while some prepare to fly.
Breathless with terror, lo, before the throne,
A messenger. He seems transform'd to stone.
With gaping mouth he stands, and haggard eye;
Upon his lips th' unfinish'd accents die.
Then near at hand was heard, unknown before,
Of barbarous instruments a dreadful roar.
Less horrible from Ætna's depth the noise,
When fell Typhœus lifts his impious voice:
Torrents of fire the thund'ring mountain pours,
And nations shriek, whom one vast grave devours.
Already now before the portal stand,
And throng the steps, a fierce and savage band.
Black on their shoulders hung their matted hair,
Large plates of brass shone with disast'rous glare,
On ev'ry breast, and ev'ry hand sustain'd
A ponderous spear with marks of blood distain'd;
All of gigantic mould, and dusky hue,
Mighty of limb, and terrible to view.

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Nor seem'd their substance flesh, but living brass,
Such as some noble artist forms the mass
Of metal fus'd, and shews to wond'ring eyes
Enceladus, who highest Jove defies.
Their gloomy eyes askance gave dreadful light:
Then parting their long files to left and right,
For one of more distinguish'd rank they made
Large way. Without leave ask'd, he march'd, nor staid
His haughty step, till to the queen he bow'd;
Then spoke: his voice appall'd the trembling crowd.
'The fame, oh queen, of thy bright-beaming eyes
'A mighty lover brings from other skies!
'His sceptre awes, beneath the southern pole,
'A people, great in arms, and proud of soul:
'A people, whose unconquer'd strength disdains
'The puny tribes o'er which Arcturus reigns.
'This awful monarch wooes thee to his throne:
'Thy matchless charms 'tis he deserves alone.

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'If any, rash or mad, dispute his right,
'For thee he deigns to prove his force in fight.
'The proudest courage, well I ween, shall fly,
'Before one glance of his terrific eye.'
While yet he speaks, the Austral king drew nigh.
Upon an elephant's huge back he rode;
Th' enormous beast seem'd conscious of the load.
As flame two beacons when the tempest roars,
Forewarning mariners of dang'rous shores,
Or quicksands in the channel which divides
Britain and Gallia, with alternate tides;
Eternal monument of wrath divine,
'Gainst Goodwin, faithless earl, and his perfidious line.
So flam'd the giant's sanguine eyes: his hair,
And ample beard, stream'd dreadful on the air;
His limbs were cas'd in plates of steel and gold,
Of price unsumm'd, and dazzling to behold;
Six arms, by threes on either side array'd;
Six mortal weapons, brandish'd high, display'd:

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Now this, now that, inflicts the fatal blow,
The sword, the spear, the poleax, and the bow,
Jav'lin, and pond'rous mace. Nor needed shield,
When one stern will so many arms could wield.
A sight so heart-appalling never man
Beheld. Pale horror through th' assembly ran.
With cheek all faded, and well acted fears,
The false Morgana sate dissolv'd in tears;
And while the king demands his trembling prize,
Turns on the bridegroom her imploring eyes.
Him all his daring, all his pride forsook,
And ev'ry recreant limb with terror shook.
Not so the Briton knight. With active bound
He leaps to earth, his clanging arms resound,
And full of hope, with bosom beating high,
Burns for the fight, nor doubts of victory.
So when a bull, collecting fury, stands,
Bellowing presents his horns, and spurns the sands;
The fearless dog, which Britain only rears,
With eager joy the call to combat hears:

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He marks his mighty foe, and coursing round,
Springs to his throat, and drags him to the ground.
Just at that moment, terror in her eye,
Morgana starting gave a piercing cry;
Thunder'd the heaven, and o'er the palace fell
Thick darkness; far resounds a dismal yell.
Then breaking quick, the fogs are roll'd away;
Shines forth again the cheering orb of day.
But the proud city, and the royal throne,
The dame that with such peerless beauty shone,
Appear no more. Alike the bridegroom knight
And giant monarch vanish from his sight;
And Paladour beholds where through the air
Morgana's chariot winged dragons bear.
The noble Cadwall with undaunted breast,
Well had perform'd Melissa's high behest.
And Archimago, bent on vengeance, found
The purpos'd mischief on himself rebound.
The shield of truth disclos'd the master spell:
The knight revers'd it, and th' enchantment fell.

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Then smit with frantic fear the wizard fled,
And call'd the rocks to hide his guilty head.
In vain. The spirits seize, and whirl in air,
To plunge him in the cavern of despair;
Condemn'd through many a painful age to feel
Th' avenging furies, with their whips of steel:
Till by the powers of darkness rais'd again
With poisonous guile to taint the hearts of men;
On the Red Cross insensate war to wage;
And spotless truth pursue with unavailing rage.

Now Paladour, whom shame and joy divide,
Beholds his brother, and his fairy guide.
'Lo here,' Melissa cried, 'the royal seat,
'For which thy heart could change my calm retreat!
'Lo, here, Morgana's faithless wiles reveal'd!'
Then full before him plac'd the sacred shield.
Swift each delusive colour melts away,
And bursts upon his soul prophetic day.
He look'd and saw a narrow path, which led
Through a dark vale, with rugged rocks o'erspread;

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A precipice abrupt on either side;
Above, before, perpetual mists reside;
Behind, more awful than the thunders roar,
A voice proclaims aloud, ye turn no more.
Sad lamentations sound, and plaintive sighs,
Deep smother'd groans, and agonizing cries;
And ev'ry where the ministers of fate,
Terrific forms, with threat'ning aspect wait:
Dark Envy's livid hue, and snaky hair;
Oppression, Want, and heart-corroding Care,
And restless Jealousy, and frantic Fear;
Treason and Fraud, and stern Revenge appear;
Despair, and Superstition's sullen brow,
And vain Regret, Remorse, and endless Woe:
One portal midst the gloom is seen to rear
Its front, now distant, now approaching near:
But there the king of terrors stands confest,
And hope itself with horror fills the breast.
The careful fairy still the knight survey'd,
And, ere despondence could his soul invade,

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'Behold,' she cried, 'where yonder glimmering ray
'Shews yet another passage to the day;
'Proceed, nor yield to fear. The noble mind
'Compels reluctant fortune to be kind.
'No more let vain desires thy purpose bend,
'And heav'nly guards shall lead thee and defend.'
She vanish'd. Nor was noble Cadwall there:
He too, like some vain shadow, lost in air.
The warrior paus'd. Meantime the glimmering light
By slow degrees gain'd on the cheerless night.
Forward he mov'd, and, fill'd with holy awe,
Before him soon a shining vision saw.
Less splendid in the rapt enthusiast's dream,
By sacred Meles, or the Syrian stream,
Seem'd Juno, consort of the thund'ring lord,
Or bright Astarte, as heav'n's queen ador'd.
A book she held: unutterable day
Shed from the sacred page a glorious ray:
The stars compos'd her crown: her sweeping vest
Heaven's purest azure: and upon her breast

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What seem'd a sun glow'd radiant: mercy's throne
Her forehead: and unclouded wisdom shóne
In her majestic eyes. Upon her state
Life and immortal joy, her handmaids, wait.
The harmonies of heav'n give forth their voice,
And shouting angels bid the world rejoice—
Glory in the highest to th' eternal King!
On earth to men good will and peace! they sing.
Benignant was the smile with which she rais'd
The knight, who, lost in awe and wonder, gaz'd.
From her celestial touch new vigour flow'd
Through all his limbs: his heart with rapture glow'd.
Smooth was the way bestrew'd with asphodel,
And ev'ry flower grateful to sight or smell,
While the pure æther, and the cloudless sky,
Inspir'd content, and hope, and mental joy.
Thus with kind heav'n to friend in happy hour,
Once more he reach'd Melissa's charming bow'r.
The choir of lovely dames his coming greet
With joyful symphonies, and voices sweet;

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Delighted friendship hails: while Cadwall prest
His long-lost brother to his manly breast,
"Welcome! thy toils are past!" Melissa cries,
"And blissful years in fair succession rise.
"Fall'n is the foe, and glorious is the meed,
"Due to thy pitying heart, and gen'rous deed."
As when wide-wasting fires, with rapid sway,
Spread through the village ruin and dismay;
And, plung'd in deep despair, the swain surveys,
Pour'd on his smoking roof, the bickering blaze;
Sudden the seraph Mercy, sent from high,
Unbars the adverse portals of the sky,
And fav'ring gales the flaming tempest bear
To waste its harmless fury on the air:
Swift through his frame the bounding spirits flow,
Joy fills his glowing heart, and sparkles on his brow.
So Paladour rejoiced. But still his breast
One anxious thought, one tender dread confest.
Where was the matchless maid? Did proud disdain
Avert her steps, or virgin fears restrain?

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Thus musing, through the well-known walks he stray'd,
The rosy bower, the green, and fragrant glade,
Till she he sought, as fair as orient dawn,
When its first radiance lights the dewy lawn,
Appear'd in view. The maid, with graceful pride,
Nor met his eager step, nor turn'd aside.
Somewhat of anger too her eyes declare;
But gentle is the anger of the fair.
Conscious of worth, and willing to be woo'd,
Soft blushing like the Sestian nymph she stood,
When young Leander pressing to her side
Whisper'd his plea of love, and won his nightly bride.
Nor Paladour in vain the damsel mov'd;
Silent she heard, relented, and approv'd.
The blissful bow'r with gratulation rung,
And spirits, call'd from heav'n, the spousal sung.
From that auspicious union sprang a race,
Brave, beauteous, rich in virtue, and in grace.
Delighted Paladour with pride reviews
The glory which his progeny renews;

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And, nobly true to friendship's holy laws,
Scarce with less transport hears the loud applause
Which nations shout, when, full of martial fire,
The sons of Cadwall emulate their sire.
Thus flew the joyous years, while o'er his head
Age, unperceiv'd, her snow full lightly spread,
Till he, who leads the spirits of the blest,
The gentle angel, to eternal rest,
Unbarr'd the golden gates, and bade him shine,
Rich in eternal youth, and heir of bliss divine.

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THE STATUES;

OR, THE

STORY OF ZEYNU 'LASNÂM.

CANTO III.

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THE STATUES;

OR, THE

STORY OF ZEYNU 'LASNÂM.

CANTO III.

Oh sweetest magic of bright-flowing hair!
Love-darting eyes, and cheeks like morning fair!
Lips, bath'd by Venus in nectareous dew!
And dimpled smiles, which who unmov'd may view?
Soft winning accents, whose melodious force
Arrests the stormy passions in their course!
And constant truth, with chaste affection join'd,
And each delicious charm of lovely womankind!
When fierce desires with fraud and force combine,
Polluting earth, and rouze the wrath divine;

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Ere yet the guilt-appalling bolt be hurl'd,
Your virtues favour find, and save the world.
For your's is mercy, pity's soft relief,
And patience smiling through the tear of grief:
Your's soft humility, and moving pray'r,
Which heav'n well pleas'd beholds, and bends to hear:
With charity diffusing blessings wide,
And graceful modesty, and decent pride.
Heav'n yields to these; but these are weak to tame
The savage man, and touch his heart with shame.
His sordid soul is stung with thirst of gain,
And honour, mercy, justice, plead in vain.
He goes without remorse, and scorning truth,
To spread the snare for unsuspecting youth,
To cozen innocence, and to despair
Betray the gen'rous, tender, trusting, fair.
Now lofty Cairo meets again his eyes,
And his fond hopes already grasp the prize.

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A thousand maids appear in glowing charms;
He deems them worthy of the fairy's arms:
To each in turn the mirror he applies:
The glass shews dim, and expectation dies.

Thence the rich plains which Libanus o'ershades,
He visits, curious of the Syrian maids,
Whose amorous ditties now are heard no more,[a]
Lamenting Thammuz on Adonis' shore.
Next where Orontes leads his mighty stream;
And fair Ionia fronts the western beam;
There Meles and Mæander wind along,
Vocal no more with high heroic song:
And where old Ida lifts his front of snow,
And Simois glitters in the plain below:
Next these the realms where once, with generous pride,
The Pontic king triumphant Rome defied:

[a] ——— Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day.
MILTON'S PAR. LOST.

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And where, in brightest hues of nature drest,
Circassia's [b] beauties bind the swelling breast.
Thence Persia he surveys, which boasts no more
Its antient satraps, and majestic pow'r;
But whose fair echoing vallies still prolong,
The joyful sound of revelry and song;
While round Shiraz the vine her sparkling juice
Pours for the blest inhabitants profuse;
And when the rising moon, of ray serene,
With softest lustre decks the lovely scene,
By Rocnabad,[c] in Mosellara's bower,
The bird of evening wooes the blushing flower.
But Syrian nymphs had glow'd with gentle flame,
E'er since Adonis mov'd the Cyprian dame:

[b] The reader may consult Ellis's Caucasus for an account of a singular custom which prevails among the Circassians, of fixing a ligature below the breasts of the young women, which is not loosed till the day of marriage, when it is cut by the bridegroom. From a similar custom, probably, the loosing of the zone, came to signify among the Greeks and Romans the loss of virginity.

[c] Rocnabad is a river of Persia, which washes the walls of Shiraz, and the gardens of Mosellara. The nightingale is said, by the Oriental Poets, to be enamoured of the Rose.

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And love had whisper'd in their secret glades,
To rough Circassia's fair high-bosom'd maids:
While the sweet bird in Mosellara's bower,
That trills his love-song to the blushing flower,
Well skill'd infectious softness to impart,
Had touch'd with passion ev'ry virgin heart.

As when the seaman whose advent'rous prow,
Long months on months, with toil, and pain, and woe,
Has plow'd th' immeasurable waves which roll
Between the burning line and southern pole,
Beholds with anxious breast, and ardent eyes,
Incumbent on the deep, a dark shade rise
Above the horizon, struggling through the tides,
As nearer now his wave-worn vessel rides,
He sees a length of hills and mountains spread,
Those crown'd with woods, while these the skies invade;
Forelands and promontories high and steep,
Lock'd in whose firm embrace the waters sleep;
And fir'd with joyful transport at the view,
Shouts loud, and calls on deck his fainting crew:

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Ev'n while he shouts, the faithless shews decay,
The fleeting vapours roll dispers'd away:
Despair succeeds. Such was the prince's pain,
His hope still frustrate, his long labours vain.
Bagdad with high dominion crown'd remains
Where the lieutenant of the prophet reigns.
Viziers and Omrahs, in the lofty gate,
Sustain and worship his imperial state.

Say, Tigris, while thy lucid waves with pride
Reflect the palaces which grace thy side;
While all thy echoes mirth and joy repeat,
And every breeze diffuses balmy sweet;
Has never yet thy stately stream survey'd
Of pure and spotless mind one lovely maid?
Must fond desire in each fair bosom reign,
And love, with life, still beat in ev'ry vein?

A dervise, at Bagdad who pass'd his days,
Had won of so much sanctity the praise,
That where he mov'd, the swarming city pour'd
Her people forth, and with fond zeal ador'd.

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It chanced that, mounted on a courser fair,
And all his anxious soul engross'd with care,
The monarch slowly pass'd along the road,
Where round the dervise pray'd the prostrate crowd,
And pass'd unheeding. With offended mind
The dervise saw, and dark revenge design'd.
And soon through all the city rumours spread;
Suspicion points to wrath the stranger's head.
The gathering storm Mobarrek mark'd, and knew
From what slight cause the threaten'd mischief grew.
Swift to the haughty dervise he repairs,
A royal present, gold and gems he bears,
And begs his aid, his counsel, and his pray'rs.
While prostrate in his master's name he sues,
The glitt'ring gifts the yielding dervise views:
The gifts, the suppliant lord, his wrath control,
And soon the banquet opens all his soul.
He learns the strange pursuit, and laughing cries,
'Thou seek'st in truth, my son, no vulgar prize,
'But bring the nuptial gift, Bagdad the bride supplies.

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'In yon high palace dwells a matchless fair,
'The vizier's daughter, sweet Nooronihár.
'Nymphs such as she shall make the faithful blest,
'And pure as angels is her peaceful breast.'
He said, and soon, by his officious care,
The prince beheld her more than Houries fair,
As heavenly spirits pure, for in his view
From her the mirror brighter lustre drew.
His rank acknowledged, and a dowry paid,
Worthy a kingdom, he obtains the maid.
But scarce the bride has enter'd at his gate,
When messengers, on high affairs of state,
Demand his instant presence. Royal care
Perforce thus tears him from th' espoused fair.
Mobarrek must the blooming queen escort,
With splendid train to high Bassora's court.
Far spreads the pompous march. On either side
Well-order'd horse display their martial pride.
Unhappy maid! who vainly deem'st the ray
Of rising morn shall those fair scenes display,

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Where prostrate nations on Euphrates' shore,
Before thy bridegroom bow, and own his sovereign pow'r.
Thee anxious doubt, and lengthen'd toil await,
And unknown dangers, and mysterious fate!
Oh, vanity of man! the prize obtain'd
Now pains his soul: the statue is disdain'd.
Fear, love, remorse, his nightly couch infest,
And peace and hope are banish'd from his breast;
His eyes have drank the poison of desire,
And ev'ry throbbing vein is swell'd with fire.
The fairy's threat that rings within his ears,
The awful oath that chill'd his soul with fears,
Disdain'd, forgotten, have no power to move;
He deems all danger light, when weigh'd with love.
'Those heavenly graces, those unrivall'd charms,
'Shall I betray them to another's arms?
'From earth, from human kind, from life, divide
'My hope, my joy, my mistress, and my bride,
'With gloomy genii, and with dæmons fell,
'To mourn and tremble in the jaws of hell'

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'The cruel fairy may, perchance, relent,
'Or pitying angels frustrate his intent.
'Justice at least must spare the faultless maid:
'By me alone the forfeit must be paid.
'Twere base the stern condition to decline,
'And death is welcome, so the maid be mine.'

As when a mountain torrent, swoln with rain,
Roaring descends to ruin all the plain;
The careful husbandman, with patient toil,
Digs a new channel in the crumbling soil,
Through which the waters from the rescu'd land,
May waste their fury on the barren sand:
Huge stones, with earth compact, across its course
Gradual obstruct the foaming water's force,
Which struggling still, and bursting oft the mound,
More rapid pours along, with thund'ring sound:
At length the growing bulwark stems the sides;
The waves roll back, and the fierce storm subsides:
Mobarrek thus with prudent speech in vain
Strives long his master's passion to restrain,

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To rash desire opposes generous fame,
His royal duties, and his people's claim;
But most his plighted faith and promise given,
And the dread oath's avenger, righteous heaven.
These, often urg'd, at length the palm obtain,
And manly reason re-assumes the rein.
Though keenest anguish rend his tortur'd heart,
Collecting all his strength, he braves the smart;
He mourns the fatal hour, when unconfin'd
The thirst of gain misled his darken'd mind;
But firm the strong temptation to defy,
Maintains his faith, and only hopes to die.

Nor less distracting doubt, and vary'd fear,
Afflict the tender bosom of the fair,
While day to day, and week to week succeeds,
And still the long unvaried march proceeds;
And all the pomp that first adorn'd the way,
And all the splendid train has slunk away;
No shouting nations her arrival greet;
No scepter'd bridegroom comes his bride to meet;

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Mobarrek with austere and careful brow,
One slave, one maid, alone, attend her now.
Yet still, where'er she moves, a sudden birth
Of fairest plants adorns the laughing earth:
O'er Afric's sandy waste fresh verdure springs,
And gurgling fountains rise, and zephyr brings
Cool airs, and scatters fragrance from his wings.
And ever, when most fiercely flames the day,
High o'er her head the waving branches play,
While through the grove ten thousand feather'd throats
Pour the sweet charm of their melodious notes,
And all around their painted plumage show,
Dipt in all colours of the heavenly bow:
No lion there his horrid mane displays,
But the swift antelope will stop to gaze;
The playful squirrel springs from side to side,
While zebras bound along in beauteous pride.
And when pale night's unwholesome damps descend,
In fair proportion polish'd domes ascend;

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By hands invisible the board is spread;
Another day unnumber'd torches shed,
And all around angelic voices sing,
While airy minstrels wake the trembling string.
The power of sleep the gentle music woos
To bathe her temples in his softest dews:
Soft gliding on the silv'ry lunar beams,
The fav'ring power descends with rosy dreams:
Delights unmix'd, and pure, her mind pervade,
And sweetest smiles adorn the sleeping maid.
Upon the rocky shore at length they stood,
Where full in view, above the mighty flood
The fairy land arose. The gentle maid
Saw the vast deep, astonish'd and afraid.
'Is this Euphrates? Where are then the bowers,
'Themes of the song? Ah where Bassora's towers?
'These roaring waves approaching ills foreshew,
'And every howling blast seems full of woe.'
Her guide no more the fatal fraud conceals,
But with sad brow, and falt'ring tongue, reveals

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The royal nuptials feign'd but to betray,
The awful genius who expects his prey.
Her blood forgets to flow; her spirits fail;
Her eyes grow dim; her lips are cold and pale:
What agony then tore the prince's heart,
Say you, whoe'er have felt a lover's smart.
His labouring lungs their office scarce sustain,
Parch'd is his tongue, his temples throb with pain;
Grief and despair his tortur'd bosom fill,
But firm his mind, unconquer'd is his will.

And soon the nymphs, a gentle troop and fair,
Nymphs of the woods, the fountains, and the air,
The fainting damsel bathe with heav'nly dew,
Recall her sense, her faded bloom renew,
Raise in their soft embrace, and fondly greet,
As sisters sisters use, with accent sweet.
Those accents sweet the virgin's fears beguile,
On her fair cheek appear'd again the smile.
Th' attendant nymphs mean time their voices raise
To speak in heav'nly harmonies her praise.

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'Stretch forth,' they cried, 'delightful land, thine arms,
'To meet Nooronihár's unrivall'd charms.
'Bid all thy echoing vallies ring with joy,
'While to exulting earth the skies reply.
'Nooronihár, with perfect beauty grac'd!
'Nooronihár, the lovely and the chaste.'
And while they sung, a miracle to view,
Near and more near the blooming island drew;
From all her lawns and bowers the balmy breeze
Before her course sheds fragrance o'er the seas;
Fresh verdure clothes the ground; on ev'ry brow
The waving groves in sign of worship bow,
And all around a shower of blossoms fling,
Till to the palace of the fairy king
That troop of nymphs divine the damsel bring.
And then an awful voice was heard in air,
'Oh prince, to thy paternal throne repair,
'The promis'd treasure there thou shalt obtain;
'But quit for ever this forbidden strand,
'Nor dare again to view the fairy land.'

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Now all was silent. And more swift than thought,
Spirits invisible the monarch caught;
A veil of mist they spread around, and bore
On the wind's pinions to Euphrates' shore.
He stood ev'n in the chamber of his sire;
But now his eyes have lost their wonted fire.
Full in his view the fatal portal rose;
But no fond transport in his bosom glows,
As when he first its massy bars descry'd,
And to the wards the golden key applied.
With eyes averted and with sullen brow
He stood, and thus at length express'd his woe.
'Oh wretch, by every sordid passion sway'd!
'Why is the wrath of heaven so long delay'd?
'But wherefore should his awful thunder roll?
'I bear the torment of a guilty soul.
'My early reign in shameful pleasure spent,
'Enervate grief, despair, and discontent,
'Succeed; and when too partial fate my throne
'Restores, sustains, by virtues not my own.

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'In vain is wealth, in vain dominion given,
'My soul insatiate baffles bounteous heaven!
'With cold disdain receives so vast a store,
'And with ungrateful madness thirsts for more.
'There stands the prize for which my peace I sold,
'Nor dare I now my gains accurs'd behold.
'Oh faith, too strictly kept! Oh love betray'd!
'Oh tears, and wailings of that matchless maid!'
Thus while he mourns, loud thunders rend the air,
And flashing fires proclaim the fairy near.
But when the tumult ceas'd, confess'd to sight,
In glory cloth'd, in awful beauty bright,
The spirit stood and spoke, while from his face
Divine compassion beam'd, and gentle grace.
'Just is thy self reproof. But heaven has view'd
'Thy painful conflict, thy desires subdued.
'Know, that an heavenly guardian from the birth
'Attends unseen on every son of earth,
'Good thoughts to prompt, and evil to control,
'And whisper saving warnings to the soul;

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'And when the germ of penitence within
'Has fix'd its fibres, and the shoots begin
'To spread with vigorous growth, and master sin;
'Assiduous, this benignant power the root
'Protects, till it mature the sacred fruit;
'Exulting then he spreads his purple wings,
'And to the throne of heaven the tribute brings,
'While the avenger, at th' Almighty nod,
'Cancels the record, and lays by the rod.[d]
'Absolv'd and free, embrace the good to come.
'Behold! th' eternal Sovereign's gracious doom,
'Indulgent to thy frail and erring mind,
'Reveal'd to sense, a guardian has assign'd,
'Thy joys to multiply, thy cares divide,
'With love to sooth, with sweet example guide,
'To teach thee virtue every good excels,
'And heaven will still be found, where virtue dwells.'

[d] This passage has some resemblance to, and may have been suggested by the accusing and recording angel, in the story of Le Fevre, in Sterne.

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Then, at his word, the portal open flew;
The golden pedestal appear'd in view,
On which display'd a lovely figure stands,
With looks of pleasure and extended hands.
As one in sleep profound, if sudden light
Appear, or clamour scare the silent night,
Starts with disorder'd air, and still misdeems
Of all he sees, and doubts if yet he dreams;
So fares the prince. His blood now scarcely flows;
Now with the rapid tide his bosom glows.
Fain would he spring his chosen fair to meet,
But doubt and dread restrain his eager feet.
Fain would he speak: the sound unfinish'd dies.
Upon the fairy his inquiring eyes
Anxious he fixes, while with clasped hands,
Quick-beating breast, and quivering lip he stands.
At length, 'It is,' he cried, 'it is the maid
'Whom my heart worship'd, while my words betray'd!
'Oh, painful moment of suspense and fear!
'Will mercy's soothing voice my spirit cheer?

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'Or does stern justice, by vain hope, prepare
'To make more keen the torment of despair?'
The gracious fairy then, 'Thy fears dismiss,
'And open all thy soul to purest bliss:
'Nor thou, bright nymph, what heaven bestows disdain,
'Thy royal bridegroom, and thy promis'd reign.'
He said, and gave her hand. With downcast eyes,
And blushing sweet consent, the nymph complies.
Th' enraptur'd prince receives the matchless maid,
In all her beauty's bloom, with every grace array'd,
And clasps with fond embrace his lovely wife,
More dear than all, than riches, thrones, or life.

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